

THE TEACHING OF  
E N G L I S H

A NEW APPROACH

BY

W. S. TOMKINSON

OXFORD  
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS  
AMLN HOUSE, F C 4  
London Edinburgh Glasgow New York  
Toronto Melbourne Capetown Bombay  
Calcutta Madras  
HUMPHREY MILFORD  
PUBLISHER TO THE  
UNIVERSITY

FIRST PUBLISHED 1921  
REPRINTED 1922, 1925, 1928,  
1935, 1940

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

# CONTENTS

CHAP		PAGE
	PREFACE . . . . .	I
	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	5
I	ORAL EXPRESSION . . . . .	7
II.	PRACTICE IN SPEECH . . . . .	19
III.	THE DEBATE . . . . .	40
IV.	READING . . . . .	51
V.	VERSE COMPOSITION . . . . .	79
VI.	PROSE COMPOSITION EXERCISES . . . . .	113
VII.	DICTATION AND LEARNING BY HEART . . . . .	162
VIII.	APPRECIATION . . . . .	174

## APPENDIX

1.	THE TEACHER'S PRIVATE READING . . . . .	222
2.	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	229





## PREFACE

'Will he have right opinion from being compelled to associate with another who knows and gives him instructions about what he should do?'—*Rep* x 602

MR. TOMKINSON, I am sure, would answer with Plato in the negative. For as self-government is better than good government, so, in education, discovery is better than direction. The teacher, like the lover, must 'find out his way'; and Mr. Tomkinson's book is mainly the record of the way he has found for himself in the teaching of English. It was not spun in the study out of fine theories, but was built up in the school out of materials furnished almost as much by the pupils as by their teacher. But, though it is the record of actual practice, that practice is not mere empiricism, but has been guided by a discerning knowledge of theories based on the results of successful teaching in the past and, especially, of recent experimental methods.

The most important of those theories is concerned with ideals, and insists that the true aim of English-teaching is not to provide a supply of clerks and office-boys, but to open the gates of that enchanted world in which Richard Feverel dwelt as the type of educated adolescence, 'lord of kingdoms, where Beauty was his handmaid, and History his minister, and Time his ancient harper, and sweet Romance his bride; where he walked in a realm vaster and more gorgeous than the great Orient, peopled with heroes that have been', the magic realm of Literature.

And as literature is communion with the imagined world, so language is the means of intercourse with the real one. Mr. Wells has placed 'widening of the means of intercourse'

first among the objects of instruction ; and Stevenson has said that when a man has not a full possession of language, the most important, because the most amiable qualities of his nature have to lie fallow and buried, so that he loses much of what makes life truly valuable—intimacy with those he loves. These, though Mr. Wells has failed to appreciate the fact, are the essential aims of those very *literae humaniores* the pursuit of which, in the older universities, he deprecates. What Greek literature did for a few in the past, English literature must do for the many in the future. The new ideal in the elementary schools is indeed the old ideal in the universities—an education not so much concerned with livelihood as with living. What is really new is the revelation of the importance of the emotional life and of the need to cultivate and enrich it by humanistic treatment of all our studies, not art and literature only, but history, geography, and science—to provide that ‘culture of the feelings’ without which, as John Stuart Mill discovered, all intellectual culture is in vain. Carlyle has stated the fundamental truth of all education : ‘A loving Heart is the beginning of all Knowledge.’ Instruction which does not widen and deepen human sympathies is ultimately a curse and not a blessing, alike to the individual and the community.

The methods discussed in this book are likewise the old methods, though modified in the light of new experience. The speech exercises, on which so much stress is rightly laid, are a return to a practice which justified itself in Greek education and in the schools of the Renaissance, and the decay of which Stow regretted in his account of Elizabethan England ; the verse-making is advocated not only because Latin and Greek verse composition has proved the best of all means towards an appreciation of Classical literature, but because modern psychology suggests that verse is a natural medium of childish expression ; and, to speak last of what is perhaps first in importance, the

training in literary appreciation is an attempt to get back to the time when the poet and minstrel was everywhere an honoured guest, when a taste for music and poetry was a national possession, and when every workman was an artist—or, at least, an art-critic.

There are people who think it more important that he should become an efficient artisan: I believe that spirits are not finely touched but to fine issues, and that an education which makes better men will also make better workmen.

E. A. GREENING LAMBORN.

LITTLEMORE,

*Nov. 5, 1920.*



## INTRODUCTION

EDUCATION is the perfecting of the powers of body, mind, and spirit ; but it is to be remarked that whereas the school consciously makes provision for the bodily and mental needs of the child, his spiritual activities are either disbelieved in or distrusted. I am, of course, aware that 'Scripture knowledge' is an examinable subject ; and I am not unmindful of the spiritual possibilities (not always realized) in drawing and music ; but authority has made no conscious attempt to enlarge, or even to explore, the spiritual kingdom of the child.

Now the study of English, and especially the study of English poetry, if properly conceived, will go far towards righting the balance. It enables the child to achieve a natural poise ; humanizes the entire work of the school ; and is competent, as the faithful are persuaded, to 'open new windows' in the national soul. It provides the spiritual adventure which man must needs seek, or become as the beasts that perish ; and which so many men pursue in base and ignoble ways. It is in addition to an intellectual discipline, what, at least, is of equal importance—a discipline for the emotions. It ministers to the love of beauty which is born in the hearts of children (witness their delight in flowers) and, too often alas dies, when

Shades of the prison house begin to close  
Upon the growing boy

It ensures in prose and verse exercises an outlet for his creative instinct ; he expresses himself as does the artist and the craftsman. And it gives him an aesthetic standard whereby he may judge between the mean and the lovely.

But too often, English in the schools is a mental oakum picking. Divorced from beauty it has not even achieved the utility of the 'winder-go-and-clean-it' method. It is the Cinderella of the curriculum. It appears under various names on the time-table ; and it is taught under various guises in the class-room, with little of the gain but a great deal of the odium that usually accompanies the use of an

alias. Many teachers have drawn their bow at a venture, while more, perhaps, have shot at impossible marks. Nor have professors and examiners given much help to the truth seeker. They too have stood, like Bedivere, 'dividing the swift mind,' now prescribing one nostrum, now proscribing another. And this unhappy confusion has led to equally unhappy results. At the leaving age, many of our children are inarticulate; more are unable to express themselves on paper, and most remain unapprenticed to literature, that is to life. It was said by a writer of the last century 'Our clowns are the stupidest in Europe. They can't spell; they can scarcely speak. They haven't a jug in their legs. And I believe they're losing their grin.' This makes painful reading for an Englishman and a teacher; and competent observers assert that we are in little or no better case to-day.

Wherein lies the remedy? There is no one specific. One can only marvel at Carlyle's schoolmaster, who gave him a 'complete knowledge of English at seven'. But though there is no one specific there are signs of the growth of an intelligent and humanistic interest in the teaching of English, and of a general desire to make a new approach and to try new methods. To give some account of recent experimental work which the writer has had opportunities of studying, and of methods he has found successful in his own practice, is the purpose of this book. Like Chaucer's parson, the author can at least say of the advice he tenders and the teaching that he advocates,

First he folwed it hymselfe.

It only remains to say how much these pages are indebted to my friend Mr. Greening Lamborn. I have to thank him not only for his preface, but also for criticism and suggestion during the progress of the book.

## CHAPTER I

### ORAL EXPRESSION

'They have been to a feast of languages and stolen the scraps'

'I tell you truly and sincerely, that I shall judge of your parts by your speaking gracefully or ungracefully'

SILENCE, the French affirm, is 'une conversation Anglaise'. It is also said to be golden, and the latter observation was probably coined by a schoolmaster, so happily does it accord with the professional attitude towards oral expression. But Education (fortunately as may be) begins in the nursery. The infant gradually senses his surroundings; and still more gradually, makes a language connexion. His vocabulary, to which even the household pets contribute, grows by a process of imitation. His teachers are unacquainted with the theory of the 'complete sentence' and are not made unhappy by their charge's gross ignorance of the laws of grammar. When the child enters the Kindergarten and later the Infant School, new words crowd in on him, while at the same time he is encouraged (in good Schools) to express himself in speech. He begins in fact to acquire the art of composition. At seven years, the child who has enjoyed a modern training, is able to describe processes, to tell a story, and to conduct a conversation on matters within his province of knowledge and interest. Moreover (in good Schools), his speech is audible and free from a disturbing accent. An interval of seven years passes. The same child at fourteen appears to be possessed of a dumb devil. He might, as Erasmus complained, have acquired his knowledge under seal of the Confessional, so diffident is he in presenting it in words. It is the business of this chapter to touch on reasons for this defect in the child's education, and to suggest how it may best be remedied. And at the outset, it may be well to bear in mind the importance of this matter.

The power of expression in speech is a very real guide

to the power and range of the intellect. Looseness of speech inevitably reacts on thought. It is true that there are exceptional people whose intellectual gifts bear no sort of ratio to their power of speech. (Arkwright in all probability, and, of course, the poet's mute inglorious Miltons.) It is also true, as Professor Adams points out, that the speech vocabulary, the reading vocabulary, and the writing vocabulary are not identical, so that the youth who invariably describes the 'weathah' as 'putrid' is not to be writ down an ass without further inquiry. Granted all this, it is still true that if a person habitually expresses himself in a slipshod and unformed manner, we may fairly assume that his ideas are slipshod and unformed. It was, no doubt, the ineffective bleating of Mrs. Nickleby that suggested to Gissing a comparison between her mental outlook and that of a Somersetshire 'ewe', a comparison which those who remember their Dickens will feel to be unfair to the 'ewe'.

Moreover, it may with reason be affirmed that a slovenly speaker is an incapable hearer. His own speech is so indefinite that it is doubtful whether he can receive with speed and accuracy the speech of others. And, of course, he can never hope for that authority which is the inalienable right of those whose speech is persuasive and convincing.

'The voice and manner of speaking, too, are not to be neglected', says Lord Chesterfield, and after noting the common faults in enunciation, the noble pedagogue ends his letter characteristically by saying that these faults 'are the distinguishing marks of the ordinary people, who have had no care taken of their education'. Unfortunately, they are still the 'distinguishing marks of the ordinary people' in spite of the care taken nowadays of their education. There is no more important task for the teacher than that of training his pupils in clear, exact, and beautiful expression of speech.

But why should the child make such poor progress in mastery of speech, nay, why should he at fourteen have lost what he possessed in a measure at seven? I am persuaded that it is due to the failure of many schools (there are shining exceptions) to recognize the enormous importance of speech training; and in a less degree, to the tyranny of the written word in our internal and external



examinations 'Oral Composition' does indeed appear on many time-tables, but it is usually confined to the younger children, and even there does not receive adequate treatment. Higher up in the schools Composition invariably means Written Composition. Nor can oral answering in class subjects remedy the omission. In point of fact, and because of its disjointed character, it probably hinders the formation of a habit of consecutive speech. The practice of speech for its own sake is needed.

A word remains to be said of examinations. They are a necessary curse; but the curse need not entail, for the harassed pupil, all of Browning's 'twenty-nine distinct damnations'. An oral test, complementary to the written one, is, in the hands of a competent examiner, a nice instrument for measuring capacity, and an opportunity for 'tempering the wind to the shorn lamb', and indeed, this is not contentious matter. But the claims of the Oral Examination are still slighted. External examiners may protest, with some reason, that children are not prepared for oral examination; but examiners, who are esteemed, after all, to be somewhat wiser than common mortals, should give a lead in this matter, knowing as they do, what excellent noses teachers have for an examination scent. Teachers need training in speech before entering college, for by then their speech habits are so fixed that they find it difficult to rid themselves of defects. Examinations for student teachers, who above all people should be helped to the gift of tongues, are still almost entirely confined to written expression.

The mistaken zeal of the earnest teacher is another stumbling-block in the way of reform. Experienced teachers know (and none better than the writer) that they habitually occupy the stage too long. They impose an almost monastic silence upon the class and pay for it by having to do all the talking themselves. They are overmuch like the pushing gentleman who whenever he went to a funeral wanted to be the corpse, and whenever he went to a wedding wanted to be the bride. Nevertheless, it is necessary for Gamahel to sit more frequently at the feet of Saul; or if this goes ill with Gamahel's dignity, at least Saul might occasionally occupy the seat of Gamahel.

But what then (it is time to ask) are the lines along

which reform must travel? The first reform must begin with the teacher. It has been well said in illustration of the strength of the teacher's influence, that a teacher at one end of a log and a student at the other, constitutes a school; and in truth the teacher's influence on the child, particularly in this affair of speech, is not to be estimated. 'Speaking correctly, and with ease and grace are certainly to be acquired by attention to the best living models.' But the living models in the schools have received little or no training in voice culture, and enjoyed little or no opportunity of hearing ease and grace of diction. In the training college with which I am most acquainted, it is only within recent years that Elocution has been taught at all; and the teacher was a broken-down actor whose 'method' was to 'tear a passion to tatters' with all the approved mannerisms of the stage. This will never do. The annual criticism lesson, together with the repetition of a little verse at the Certificate Examination, added to the doubtful counsel of an elocution 'Professor' no longer meet the modern teacher's needs. Teachers are or should be artists, and the voice is their instrument; and yet their manner of speech rarely receives adequate training. As well expect a street violinist to play the Devil's Trill, or a low comedian to sing the Prologue in *Pagliacci*, as expect the teacher to render the music of poetry with the 'Board School Voice'—not that he is expected, of course, to attempt anything of the kind. It has always been a matter of wonder to me that whereas singing is recognized to be a difficult art, and immeasurable pains are taken to train the singer, yet the rendering of the music of the spoken words, which is probably an even more difficult art, has received little or no attention. Oral expression, then, should be systematically taught in the training colleges. Both as a knife-and-fork study and for its cultural value, it can claim more consideration than it receives at present. The teaching should be in the hands of the English master; and matter and manner should occupy attention, particularly manner.

And first of the manner of speech. Certain preliminaries are concerned with the correct use of the vocal organs. The larynx is not singly concerned, though many teachers' voices begin and end there. Perfect breath control,

a proper pitch, and the use of the head as a resonating chamber are all essential to a good production. The control of the breath turns largely upon physical condition, and a correct pitch is a matter for the ear. Resonance depends upon an appreciation of the fact that the sound vibrations are taken up and reinforced by the hard palate and the lower jaw. A convincing exercise is to sing a few notes down the nose, when the vibrations will be clearly felt. Nasal production, without the unpleasant nasal quality, is the essence of the modern voice methods, and until it is mastered, teachers will continue to strain and to suffer 'clergyman's sore throat' and voice fatigue.

The timbre of the voice is of the first importance, and although Nature distributes her vocal gifts unevenly, much may be done to improve quality of tone. Habitual disregard of the natural pitch of the voice is quite common in public speaking, and a pleasing variety of pitch uncommonly rare. The speaking voice has a surprisingly large compass (it varies greatly with individuals) and many effective notes are never struck in average speech. Personal experiment will convince one of the truth of this, and teachers will find such experiment interesting and fruitful. Many voices lose in quality because 'we Englishmen being far northerly, do not open our mouths in the cold air but are observed by other nations to speak exceedingly close and inward'. Good generous vowels are essential to beauty of tone; and along with a deliberate clearance of final consonants will secure that clarity of outline which gives distinction to common speech.

It is to be admitted that the authorities are awakening to the importance of training teachers in habits of clear, consecutive, and pleasant speech. In most of the Training Colleges the problem is now being approached by a phonetic method; and it is to be hoped that this difficult work is in competent hands. Scotland—where the problem of accent is perhaps more acute than it is with us—led the way. An attempt has been made in the Scottish Training Colleges to conform the student's speech to a standard which should be equally acceptable and intelligible to those coming from widely separated districts. This standard has been named somewhat quaintly 'Scotch English', and while it is perhaps too early to determine in what degree the experi-

ment has been successful, it cannot fail to be fruitful in suggestion for English Training Colleges. The day has gone by when phonetics could be dismissed as still another fad. One has only to listen to a competent phonetician to realize how much lacking in clarity and distinction is the speech of the majority. There is, it is true (to my ears at any rate), a somewhat disagreeable hardness in the tone quality of the phonetician's speaking voice. It may be, as Professor Hulbert suggests, that this is the result of a conscious attention to the muscular movements in speech, although it is difficult to see why the hardness should persist when the muscular movements become involuntary. Or perhaps my experience has been unfortunate.

The ground which the phoneticians cover will be found set out in the next chapter. While it is not to be gainsaid that a natural gift for imitation and a good ear may, provided he has good models, enable the student to acquire good speech habits; it is equally to be admitted that a system of phonetics will help both in the training of the ear and in the correct formation of sounds.

It may be remarked in passing, that a curious attempt to standardize pronunciation has been made in Germany of recent years. It took its rise in the devastating effect which divergencies of pronunciation admittedly caused in the presentment of the drama, and particularly of the classic drama. A Committee considered the whole matter, and its recommendations took effect in the authoritative *Bühnenaussprache* which is now the accepted standard of German speech. This appears to run counter to Sainte-Beuve's dictum that 'It is universal suffrage which rules a language, and no dictator has any authority'; but it may reasonably be urged in the German defence that they have no equivalent to the Théâtre Français in which a pure pronunciation of the mother tongue is piously preserved. There seems to be reason to fear that the phonetician is meditating some such attempt on English speech. It is foredoomed to failure. Even if the phonetician had the last word on English speech, which he has not, there is no such thing as an absolute standard of speech. Over and above the wider variations of class and locality, the speech of the individual varies subtly from time to time in accordance with the audience, the occasion, and the mood of the speaker.

The rate of utterance is important. It is much too uniform, especially in reading, and many effects both in prose and verse are thereby placed beyond our technique. It may be that we speak and read too slowly. Professor Bradley points out that a Shakespeare play without cuts was performed by the Elizabethans in something under two hours (we take something like three, with cuts), and suggests that an audience which was accustomed to throw rotten apples at the tiring-room curtains to hasten the appearance of the actors would not be likely to tolerate indistinctness of utterance. 'Speak the speech, I pray you,' says Hamlet to the players, 'trippingly on the tongue.'

There is more than a sufficiency of material for practice. All the subjects provide opportunities for talk. The student should explain to his fellows mathematical processes and laboratory experiments; he should lecture in history and geography; he should take the drill class; he should act; he should sing solos; he should defend and attack in open debate; above all, he should render prose and poetry. In his student days he must live to talk, since in his working days he must talk to live. When the 'English' teacher can handle the stops on the Miltonic organ, or command the ground-swell of Burke; when he can voice the melodies of Swinburne, or the airs and graces of Francis Thompson; he may hope to give to his children the good gift of Appreciation which is the fine flower of art teaching.

We come now to consider what oral expression will do for the child. It will—I conceive—exercise him in the art of composition (for it may not be supposed that composition is solely a written exercise). It will cultivate peculiar powers of the mind. It will put him in possession of an instrument of self-culture and of social value.

The child, as we have already seen, usually enters the primary school not unversed in the art of composition. He may not recognize the sentence when it is defined, but he is familiar with it in fact. His vocabulary, of course, is largely a speaking vocabulary. Quite suddenly two novel and perplexing problems are presented to him. He is required to put pen to paper (in itself a laborious and absorbing exercise at this stage) and compose; and he is required to turn orthographer. What is achieved? 'Now

he is turned orthographer', says Benedick, 'his words are a very fantastical banquet.' They are indeed. And his composition, at least what of it is to be recognized in its strange garb, is meagre and disjointed. The insistence on writing as the main approach to composition, restricts the child to crawling after he has learned to walk. It is this consideration which has led the new school of English teachers to make a fresh approach to composition in the lower classes and to order their work on the sequence: Speech first; Writing second.

This method is not really 'New' though it is convenient to call it so in distinction to the bulk of present-day practice. The Greeks regarded 'Direct Speech' as an essential part of a liberal education. It was considered necessary in a free-speaking democracy for a man to be able to defend himself in speech and to persuade others. Even the silent Spartans have left us an adjective 'laconic' which goes to show that they could be pointed in speech as well as heroic in action. There is nothing necessarily inconsistent between the ability to talk things and the ability to do them; and even your 'practical' man would be fain to admit that garrulous Greece and rhetorical Rome made some small stir in the world. And this is not altogether by the way, since the path of the reforming teacher will always remain beset by the Philistines who hold with Montaigne that 'the true educators' were the Spartans who despised literature and cared only for character and action.

In our own times we have seen Professor Blackie teaching Greek by a speech method at Edinburgh, Dr. Rouse teaching direct Latin at the Perse School, and the modern language teachers making speech the basis of their teaching. That it is only just being recognized as such by teachers of the mother tongue is a striking illustration of the obscurity of the obvious.

The position of the old guard who practise a writing approach to composition is no longer tenable. Presenting, as it habitually does in the lower classes, wrong forms to the eye, it actually hinders the growth of a correct spelling and it does little for the handwriting. In fact some American teachers contend that the speech approach results in a better hand. Neither does it give anything like adequate practice, at a time when quantity is more impor-

tant than quality. But even if written composition resulted in much better spelling and much better handwriting in the lower classes it would still be paying much too dear for the whistle.

'Speech maketh a ready man' says Lord Bacon in his condensed manner, and Matthew Arnold does but paraphrase the adjective when he says that 'some of the requisites of intellectual work are especially the affair of quickness of mind and flexibility of intelligence'. Precisely: and public speaking in school is a training in quickness and flexibility. It puts an edge on attention, and makes the child quick at the uptake. But it may hope to do more. A child who can explain in speech a logical process, such as a rule in Arithmetic, makes a first-hand acquaintance with the law of sequence in composition. He is in the way to understand half of Pater's conception of style as a sort of architecture, in which every statement has its place, and in which you may not disturb one without tumbling the whole building about your ears. Or again, a child who is practised in describing a process in a time-order (mending a bicycle tyre or making a pudding, for example) is less likely to present his written matter in that chaotic manner which is the despair of the teacher.

And then there is debate. A boy who can live through a heckling (and heckling should be encouraged in debate) and keep his wits and his temper, is putting a discipline on himself which will be of real service in the rough and tumble which awaits him when the school door closes on him for the last time. Your heckler, too, may in an excess of zeal lapse into a mere obstructionist, and suffer the pains of expulsion at the hands of the house, which will be in the nature of a warning to him, and also a very proper assertion of the rights of majorities.

Lastly, we come to consider the practice of the spoken word as an aid to culture and material advancement—unusual bedfellows it may be remarked. 'Would I had followed the Arts' groans Sir Andrew Aguecheek in the pain of discovering that something more goes to the making of a man than 'three thousand ducats a year' and the gift of 'the back-trick as strong as any man in Illyria'. That something more—Culture, Art, Taste—the teachers are now asked to supply. Culture in the schools is no longer

in need of an apologist as in the days when Arnold and Ruskin preached to deaf ears. It has now received the sanction of Authority ; and one can but hope that the young shoot, an exotic so to speak, in the schoolroom, after surviving official neglect will survive the much more trying ordeal of official tending.

The appeal to the ear is a broad way to culture ; and the human voice is incomparably the finest instrument wherewith that appeal may be sounded : yet how rarely in the schools is the speaking voice used in the service of beauty. A beautiful voice is the supreme gift and it is regrettable that teachers appear to set no great store by it. Whoever heard of a school prize being given for the best speaking voice ? I know of one primary school where such a prize is given : it is probably the only one in England.

We have lamentably fallen from our high estate. In the Middle Ages, says Jusserand, 'music and poetry travelled with the minstrels and gleemen along the English highway, it was expected from them that they would bring joy and forgetfulness'. In Elizabeth's day we sang better and probably more than any nation in Europe. Now instead of 'rousing the night owl with a catch that would draw three souls out of one weaver' the family listens to comic songs on the gramophone, or encourages the child whose 'execution' is commendable, to give reminiscences of favourite hymns on the piano. But I am not concerned mainly with song, although solo singing should have a place in every well-considered scheme of oral expression. Poetry and prose rendered by the teacher for charm of sound will give the child some standard of tonal beauty to which his own attempts may approximate. It is, of course, impossible for the immature voice to do full justice to poetry, although there are effects which will probably be better secured by the child's treble (The Milking Song in 'High Tide', for example). But it is important that the child should know his own voice, and what he can do with it over and above cat-calling in the back areas. It is important that he should realize that he has within himself a source of sweet music and pure delight. Incidentally the teacher, cast for the somewhat novel rôle of audience, may find some pleasure in the child's efforts to make music, always supposing that the critic in him can wait till the 'turn' is finished.



The utilitarian argument for clear and consecutive speech need not be laboured. The 'irate employers' and 'puzzled taxpayers', whose naïve complaints in the newspapers usually perplex the teacher, are for once on reasonable ground. It is surely not too much to expect that the finished article should be able to speak audibly, and to carry a verbal message with a fair degree of accuracy. The ability to use words with precision has a higher market value we may well believe than the so-called commercial subjects as taught in many primary schools. It is at least probable that a boy who can make a class see the point of a joke may carry his own point when occasion arises. Speech practice is a means to secure that 'good address' which figures so frequently in the business advertisements.

There is, too, a social as well as a business value to set on oral expression. All of us remember that painful stage in our youth when to enter a room full of people seemed a rather worse ordeal than battle. The old Cambridge don who was accustomed to say 'Can't you go, must you stay?' to the shy undergraduate, who of course was dying to get away, but could not bring himself to say his farewells, was wise as well as learned. If we can help the youth to conquer that shyness which is the pitiable condition of the tongue-tied, we may hope, if not for *his* gratitude, at least for the gratitude of his hearers. Whatever else we may do for our pupils, if we can make his 'English swete upon his tonge', as Chaucer says of his fat friar, we shall not have wrought amiss.

Excuses are not wanting for the inadequacy of the child's speech. There is, we are told, the influence of the home, which is, or is said to be, fatal to good speech. I am convinced that this influence, though present in fact, is often over-rated. What actually happens (as Mr. Greening Lamborn has pointed out) is that the child becomes bi-lingual. Our problem, and it is not at all an insoluble one, is to replace the patois of the home by the English of the school. It can be done, although of course back-sliding is common, and failures are to be admitted.

One hears it said that the growth of self-consciousness in elder children, and particularly in girls, hinders free expression of speech. Self-consciousness, however, is not unknown in the infant school; and where the teaching

atmosphere is sympathetic, self-consciousness is allowed for, and the self-conscious helped and encouraged.

But it is certain that no one who has charge of the education of the young is absolved by any real or fancied objections from making every effort to give them a measure of efficiency, in the speaking as well as the writing of the mother tongue. The late Mr. Bunsby was accustomed to say that the bearing of observations lay in their application; and this must be the concern of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### PRACTICE IN SPEECH

'Of all the faculties that belong to the human nature, there is none more admirable or excellent than the power of speech'

'What says my bullyrook? Speak scholarly and wisely.'

THERE were brave men before Agamemnon; and brave speech reformers before Mr. Caldwell Cook. 'We intend', says an eighteenth-century enthusiast, 'to conduct the young speaker, from lower degrees of perfection, to higher, till at last he is enabled to display to the best advantage, all the riches of language, the charms of voice, the powers of the understanding, of the imagination, and of the passions. Let me intreat the candid reader, to accompany me in the road of simplicity and truth. A delightful prospect will shortly open, every sense is sweetly soothed, a new vigour animates his soul; at last he gains exulting the long wished for summit, and takes his distinguished seat, among the heroes of antiquity. Such is the glorious effect of all subduing art.' Such indeed—in the eighteenth century—it may have been. The aim of the present chapter is rather more modest. It is a collection of speech exercises for children, with some account of how they may be best practised in the class-room. Truly the words of Mercury sound harsh after the songs of Apollo.

Before considering in detail the matter and manner of the child's speech, it may be well to set down in axiomatic fashion the case for free speech among school children.

- (a) The child comes to school to learn to talk.
- (b) The child learns to talk by talking.
- (c) He will only talk with freedom on matters which interest him.
- (d) He will talk best when he is at ease with his audience.

Intelligent opinion is prepared to concede the above ground, although there are many teachers as yet unconvinced, and there is still enough of the old disciplinary Adam among the converts to make them chary of accepting all that free speech connotes in the practice and routine

of the school. The tradition of the silent school, which is dying so hard a death, is in a direct line with the old-time attitude towards children. The model child of a past generation maintained a quite appalling silence in the presence of his elders and betters. And on the Sabbath in particular he was plunged in a gloom profound enough to satisfy the Banbury puritan who hanged his cat on Monday for killing a mouse on Sunday. In their attitude to the child in this affair of speech, schoolmasters have been only parents writ large, and it is not surprising that oral expression has been so long in coming into its kingdom.

It is of quite peculiar importance that the primary school child should receive a training and practice in speech. In one of Gissing's books there is a dreadful example of a boy who recited a stanza of the *Ancient Mariner* in this manner :

The silly buckets *on* the deck,  
That 'ed so laung remined,  
O! drempt that they were filled with doo ;  
An' w'en o! awoke, it rined.

This is not the English language, neither is it poetry, and it raises our problem in an acute form. It is plain truth that the majority of primary school children do not speak the language of their own poets ; and to those who are aware of the enormous importance of fine speech in the rendering of poetry, it is no consolation to be assured by the phonetician that standard spoken English is not more intrinsically valuable as sound than a dialect. The problem is further complicated by the fact that many children do not use even their own dialect correctly. Indeed our generation has seen a marked deterioration of the speech standard, and this not confined to any particular class.

Now it is certain that the schools cannot entirely dispossess dialect in favour of standard English. This is no matter for regret. Dialects have a value quite apart from the sentiment which prompts us to preserve old survivals : they contain, for example, a great store of pictorial and fresh words capable, in the right hands, of invigorating the written language. A more important value for the teacher lies in the obvious fact that a child in using dialect is using his native speech and so may be expected to express

himself with more power and precision in dialect than in standard English. But this does not absolve the teacher from making every effort to give the child some mastery of cultivated speech. It is not always remembered that dialect and standard speech may exist side by side, although it is probable that one of them gains at the expense of the other. Teachers will find it helpful to acquaint themselves with the speech of their own district. It is a sort of snobbery to be horrified at the dialect of one's own county, while admitting a certain charm in that of other counties.

The problem of teaching English in the primary schools is, in its essence, the problem of teaching a foreign language. The child is confronted with variations of idiom and sound sufficiently wide and deep to make standard English almost a new tongue. Now the modern teaching of foreign language has a pronounced phonetic basis. The labours of English and French phoneticians have made it possible to regard phonetics as an exact science. They claim to give very material help to teachers in the following directions:

1. Ear training—that is the nice discrimination of spoken sounds.
2. Sound making—the correct reproduction of a sound correctly heard.
3. The production of sounds in a proper order.
4. A right incidence of intonation, length, and stress.
5. The production of sound sequences with a correct rapidity and without stumbling.

These are large claims and obviously of interest to the teacher of English who is concerned with problems of accent and wrong pronunciation. But any attempt to introduce phonetics into primary schools must face well-nigh insuperable difficulties. In the first place it is not possible to acquire phonetics from a book, and even if it were possible, a great many of the books (on the authority of Professor Daniel Jones) are unsatisfactory, and many positively misleading. But there are scarcely enough competent phoneticians to supply the needs of the training colleges; and the present generation of teachers is almost entirely untrained in modern phonetic method. And lastly, there are those two perennial difficulties in the way of reform—lack of time, and the size of the classes.

What then is to be done ? There is every reason why we should not wait until the speech experts take hold of the problem. That day is too far off. Much may be done by imitation both conscious and unconscious, always supposing that good models are available and that the child is caught young. Professor Wyld affects to scorn imitation as a short cut which leads nowhere ; but no one who has had an opportunity of comparing the street speech and school speech of upper division girls, will entirely agree with him. It is important that the business should be taken in hand early, that is in the nursery and infant schools, for in the affair of speech many children are in Sancho Panza's phrase ' as God made them and oftentimes a good deal worse '.

Before discussing some few of the problems bound up in the teaching of standard spoken English, some mention must be made of the physical defects of speech such as stammering and huskiness of tone, which are in the power of the teacher at least to alleviate if not to remedy. Such defects are more properly dealt with by the specialist, but where such help is not provided the teacher is under some responsibility to do what he can for the sufferer. The commonest organic defect is stammering. It is a nervous disability caused partly by lack of breath control, partly by an imperfect co-ordination of the muscular effort needed in speech. Breathing is a rhythmic movement, and the presence of a strong rhythm either in the speech matter itself, or presented artificially, is of great value. Thus it is very generally observed that singing effects a temporary cure. Sing-song speech is helpful, and should be encouraged rather than suppressed. A steady rhythm tapped out on the desk during speech will go far to cure mild cases, and if the beat can be maintained by the pupil himself, so much the better. Breathing exercises are essential. Deep breaths should be taken before speech begins, and if a breakdown occurs, the teacher should give the order ' breathe ' and continue to direct (by hand movements) the child's breathing until control is regained. Obstinate cases are best treated out of school. Stammering is a cruel infliction and its cure depends a great deal on the growth of self-confidence.

Huskiness of tone is caused partly by over-breathing,

which leaves a surplus of breath not converted into tone, partly by the voice being muffled in the throat instead of gaining resonance from the hard cavity of the mouth and jaw. It is difficult to cure. Nasal production will get rid of the huskiness, but the remedy is possibly worse than the disease. Some simple explanation of the phenomena of voice production may be helpful with elder children, and certainly the teacher's 'speak up' which often results in tone-forcing, should be replaced by the more sensible direction 'speak forward'. Correct pitch is of great importance. Children habitually (particularly boys) pitch the speaking voice too high, and produce a strident and unpleasant tone. This is particularly noticeable in debate. Carrying power is hindered rather than helped by pitching the voice high. A quiet and pleasant conversational pitch is much more economical and more effective, and it should be habitually employed between both teacher and class.

We are now to consider what may be done apart from definite phonetic treatment to build up some standard of school speech which shall bear not too remote a relation with what is ambiguously called 'standard spoken English'. Different constructions, different sounds, and (in many districts) a different sentence cadence or intonation are the main features which mark off dialect English from standard English.

The wrong construction is easier to deal with than the wrong sound. The difficulty with the latter is, that the child is usually unconscious that anything is amiss. Fortified by the practice of the majority, he may even regard your pronunciation of the offending words as outlandish but rather amusing. I well remember the sort of good-natured intolerance with which a class of Oxford boys regarded my attempts to improve the offensive 'eyou' sound as in 'heyouse'. They endured my quite incomprehensible analysis 'ah-ow': they produced with some success 'ahow'; and they all fell from grace at the first temptation. The one thing possible (apart from phonetics) is to train the ear to convict the voice. It is possible to make the child recognize the difference, for example, between 'dall' and 'doll'; between 'bu'r' and 'butter', between 'oi' and 'i', and where words have broken down from a hard to a less hard pronunciation as in our local 'destes' for 'desks',

'frosted' for frosts, the remedy is to insist on the clearance of the difficult consonants. But it is a wearisome business, and the most that can be done with many children is to convince them of their error. Nothing but sustained, conscious, and scientific effort will root out a native pronunciation, and often men of considerable education carry their native accent to the grave. A great deal of slipshod speech is due, in both adults and children, to laziness. The muscles of the lips are not brought fully into play. While there should be no need for that display of the teeth often observed in actors, lip muscles should not be allowed to atrophy. A useful exercise is to whisper the vowels with a free, almost exaggerated play of the lips. Some teachers have attempted to secure full pronunciation of those parts of words ('tion' for example) which are commonly elided in ordinary speech. It is necessary in ceremonial speech such as intonation and in much poetry to give each syllable its written value, but in ordinary intercourse it is startling, and most people's ears are outraged rather than charmed by the effect. An admirable series of exercises, called 'First Steps in Speech' has been prepared by Miss Elsie Fogarty.

It is possible to take a much more hopeful view of wrong constructions. Begin by obtaining a list from the class of the most common, and so direct attention to them. This marks them off from correct speech. I preserve in my museum such abortions as 'Her ain't a calling we, us don't belong to she'; 'he killed a pig for oit'smornin'; 'we bent agoin to Oxford 'sarternoon', and perhaps the quaintest of the lot 'I got arn a cup o'tay afore ee went on smornin'. Grammatical explanation in such cases as these merely darkens counsel. We must appeal again to the ear and we must dogmatize. A child will readily be brought to admit that 'Wot be y'at' sounds wrong, especially if it is patterned by the teacher, and we may then introduce the golden rule 'If it sounds wrong in school speech, it probably is wrong'. This is one reason why it is important for the child to read his written work aloud. 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' The genuine dialect is not quite in the same case as the local provincialisms. The old dialects of England were most grateful to the ear, and capable of being wrought into poetry. But they are rapidly being replaced even in remote country districts by a bastard speech which is neither of the



town nor of the country. The teacher who is lucky enough to have an old dialect for his raw material should think again before attempting to turn it into conventional English.

It may be asked what standard of pronunciation we are to aim at. There is no absolute standard. A reasonable guide is the pronunciation of cultured people. Contemporary variations are few, and variations between current and past pronunciation, as in Pope's couplet,

Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,  
Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea (tay),

are of interest rather than importance. The responsibility of providing a good model rests mainly with the teacher. Affectation and pedantry—the Church and Stage supply examples—are to be avoided. 'He was so pleasant spoken I thought he was some form of a schoolmaster' says one of Stevenson's characters, and the teacher ought to make an honest effort to live up to this compliment. He should avoid that mincing speech which is commonly known as the 'lah-de-dah', and sometimes thought (by its users only) to be the perfection of the Oxford manner. He should shun the words of learned length and thundering sound with which Goldsmith's schoolmaster amazed the rustics, and aim at the 'natural, simple, affecting' manner which the same author allowed to Garrick. Gramophone records of good speech are useful, but many records are too 'stagey' to be used in the schoolroom.

We have now to deal with the speech of the child. Simple and brief exercises directed to improve the general speech technique are of considerable profit. It is important that the child should perceive the aim of this practice. You may then hope for his co-operation. And it is important that the training should begin while the speech organs are flexible. Although the following exercises are grouped for the convenience of the reader, they should, in practice, be alternated. Frequent and systematic practice is necessary.

## I. THE MANNER OF SPEECH

### 1. *Exercises for Beauty of Tone*

Beauty of tone depends upon good vowels. Vowels are the jewels (in a setting of consonants) which give warmth and colour to speech. All the records which we have of the

manner in which poets rendered poetry, are agreed upon the tonal beauty of the rendering. Hazlitt says that Coleridge read the ballad of 'Betty Foy' aloud 'with a sonorous and musical voice'—that voice, to quote again, which rose 'like a steam of rich distilled perfumes'. And the examples could be multiplied.

It will be noticed that I have drawn on the music of the poets and avoided the elocutionist's mechanical list of words, which are apt to sound as lifeless in the rendering as they are arbitrary in the arrangement.

- (a) Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks  
In Vallombrosa
- (b) With her five handmaidens, whose names  
Are five sweet symphonies—  
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,  
Margaret and Rosalys.
- (c) To the island Valley of Avilion;  
Where falls not hail or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly.
- (d) Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant King;  
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring;  
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing;  
Cuckoo, jug jug, pu we, to witta woo.

(Indeed the whole of this delightful song, with its beautiful vowel scheme, varied in the three stanzas but consistent in each separate stanza, is most valuable.)

- (e) Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry  
Teru, Teru, by and by. (Trill the *r* if you can!)
- (f) There Cincinnus of Arretium  
On his fleet roan was seen;  
Tolumnius with the belt of gold,  
And dark Verbenna from the hold  
By reedy Thrasymene.

(Macaulay is rich in the magic of proper names and affords excellent practice.)

- (g) As when, some grey November morn, the files  
In marching order spread, of long-necked cranes  
Stream over Caslin, and the Southern slopes  
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries  
Or some froze Caspian sea board.

- (h) Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir  
 Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,  
 With a cargo of ivory  
 And apes and peacocks,  
 Sandal-wood, cedar wood, and sweet white wine.

There is a rich repertoire in both verse and prose, and the examples here set down, could be matched many times over. The teacher will find interest and profit in making his own selection ; and the pupil a new and quite legitimate use for his anthology

## 2. Exercises for Clear Articulation and Facility

Clear speaking is to be attained by crisp enunciation of consonants, and the exercises given below, through not dealing with individual consonants as such, are intended mainly as consonant practice. 'Remember your consonants and forget yourself' is excellent advice for the speaker. Final consonants are the most troublesome, though *f* and *v* initial are commonly obscure. The exercises should occasionally be whispered.

- (a) Tom a Lin and his wife and his wife's mother  
 Both fell into the fire together  
 Said the one at the top, 'I've got a hot skin' ;  
 'It's hotter below' said Tom a Lin (With a marked Accelerando).
- (b) Three gray geese on the green were grazing ; gray were the  
 geese and green was the grazing
- (c) Miss Piper prettily pronounces prunes and prisms.
- (d) Happy Harry hunts the hippo.  
 Hiding in his reedy home,  
 If his rifle should miscarry,  
 Then the hip hunts happy Harry.  
 'Twas brillig and the slithy toves  
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe ;  
 All mimsy were the borogroves  
 And the mome raths out grabe.
- (e) Has Herbert hurt Horace ?  
 No ! but Hildebrand has hit Henry hard intentionally.
- (f) And the muttering grew to a grumbling,  
 And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling.  
 [And for nine more lines without any mumbling.]

There is good practice in the whole of *The Pied Piper*, and along with 'How the water comes down at Lodore', it affords special exercise in the final g, which is so painfully obtrusive in the Midlands.

(g) Mrs Fiske's fried fish sauce shop

And to show how beautiful the 's' may be :

(h) When to the sessions of sweet silent thought

I summon up remembrance of things past.

(i) Relishing crumbs thrown on the ground,

The ruddy robin romps around.

R's if trilled delicately are delightful to the ear; but unless one happens to be born a northerner, the trill is difficult. To 'vibrate the tongue tip in the breath stream', as the elocution books direct, requires a considerable practice

(j) Merry Margaret,

As midsummer flower,

And as full of good will

As fair Isaphill,

Cohander,

Sweet pomander,

Good Cassander,

Far may be sought

Ere that ye find

So courteous, so kind

As merry Margaret,

This midsummer flower,

Gentle as falcon

Or hawk of the tower. (To be said Allegro.)

(h) The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,

The furrow followed free ;

We were the first that ever burst

Into that silent sea.

Alliteration is admirable practice for initial consonants. Ear practice in speech is as necessary in the junior school as ear practice in music, and in some districts surprising combinations may be anticipated. The following list might be made into sets, each set to contain one vowel sound. Similar exercises may be taken from the reader. The homophones with which Dr. Bridges has been horrifying us recently can be made to serve for excellent ear-practice in the class-room.

Hand	mope	mow	Ruth	rue	shout	flit	need
bean	bowl	fall	soot	prone	kin	flow	grew
tap	fruit	raw	but	steep	land	cat	howl
sit	toad	so	full	bit	preen	mown	shoe
flow	flew	talk	prayer	two	Joe	tomb	shore
nook	shut	hut	fare	rook	strung	fear	mere

## II. THE MATTER OF SPEECH

We come now (in the light of the great principle of interest) to consider the content of oral expression. Speech exercises should be varied; many composition exercises are worked to death by unimaginative teachers. They should admit of a rough grading in difficulty. They should not require the child—at all events in the lower classes—to exercise criticism of matter or conscious judgement. And they are good in proportion as they approach spontaneous speech.

The question of grading deserves examination. Catechism is an obvious and easy approach to oral expression. Then comes direct observation. Remembered observation or mental pictures is the next and natural step. The introduction of imagination as in the story is another advance, although it presents no difficulty to young children and will be very often better presented by them than a direct observation exercise. Impersonation (an excellent writing exercise), in which the child is required to sustain a conversation in character, is again harder, and demands too much deliberation to be of service, except in the senior school. The description of processes, where a time sequence is automatically present, prepares the way for the Lecturette which calls for definite information and an ordered sequence of matter. Then there are the more formal exercises, the mock trial, and the mock election campaign (which are good fun as well as good speech practice), the playlet, and the solo singing. The debate is properly reserved for senior children. The best exercise is indubitably the one that results in most speech.

### I. *Catechism*

The method of question and answer as commonly used in the class-room has its weaknesses. Usually the answers are so short that most of the speech falls to the teacher. Moreover, since the teacher's questions tend to return on them-

selves both in matter and form, there is a very real danger that the child may become stereotyped in his answering, and fail to respond to any but his master's voice. Connected reproduction which places the burden on the right shoulders should be used as well as the question, when testing for information. Children should question each other, the teacher, and their own work. I give below a child's questions to his own class.

*Catechism in Geography.* Questioner A. B., aged 8.

*Ques.* Which is the nearest town to Oxford ?

*Ans.* Woodstock

*Ques.* What is the name of the river that runs through Sandford ?

*Ans.* The Thames

*Ques.* What road runs past our School ?

*Ans.* The Oxford Road

*Ques.* What is the name of the nearest island ?

*Ans.* Kennington Island.

*Ques.* How far is a mile ?

*Ans.* From Ashhurst War Hospital to the bottom of Rose Hill.

## 2. Direct Observation

A characteristic of children's work in this exercise is the tendency to obtrude details and omit important features. This is to be expected of draughtsmen who will show volumes of smoke pouring out of the chimney of a house and forget to put in the door. A valuable habit of mind may be formed if the teacher insists on essentials receiving prior and adequate treatment in direct observation exercises. The common objects of the class-room and contents of pockets will provide many subjects. After the description is spoken, the class may ask questions of the speaker, and should be expected to answer any questions he may think fit to put to them.

## 3. Mental Pictures

This is an excellent practice for oral expression. The simplest form of the exercise is to ask the child to describe some invisible object which may be produced afterwards and examined to see if it fits the description. The guessing game is a useful variation. The child describes some object without naming it, until the gradually accumulating details

discover the name to his audience. Imagination is drawn on for stories or descriptions of what might have happened. 'Castles in Spain' built into speech is another form in which this exercise may be given. Usually the stories are a compound, in which imagination and memory are mixed in varying proportions; but the example given below must surely be *sui generis*.

*Example. A story.* Told by B. P., aged 7

Once upon a time there was a man He had a bear The bear went into a field where there were a lot of sheep He killed a sheep, and carried it away The man killed the bear, and then he had a monkey and a dog as well Then the monkey killed the cat The monkey told the cat to catch hold of his tail; and they saw a horse and asked him to 'join on'. And they all ran along the road and when they came to a pond they all fell in But the horse got out.

*Note.*—The cat it will be observed enjoys a speedy resurrection. The child is under no bondage to his facts, and is not limited by probability. But does not Cervantes bury Dapple in one chapter, and still make it convenient for Sancho Panza to ride him in the next?

'Joining on' it should be explained is a very popular pastime in these parts. Children catch hold of each other's coats and career round until numerous reinforcements cause the tail to become unwieldy, and a general disintegration takes place.

*Example An imaginary incident.* Described by W. T., aged 10

One day as I was going down Rose Hill, I saw a motor car It was trying to turn round Iffley turn It ran into a wall and the four wheels came off of it and the front part had got a big hole in it The driver and the people were taken to the infirmary, and one of the people that was not hurt went to a place to fetch some people to come and repair it. They tried to put the wheels on, but the two front ones were broken so they put two new ones on. Then they had the damaged motor fastened to the back of another motor and took it to a garage.

#### 4. *Reproduction of Information acquired in silent reading*

This is a much speedier test for information than writing. An interval should elapse between reading and reproduction, or the speech will smack strongly of the reading-book.

*Example. A silent reading in History.* Reproduced by B. T., aged 8.

I have been reading about a merciful queen Edward III was fighting in France and he placed his soldiers round Calais He fought—fought—(self-correction) for nearly a year and then at last the people of Calais had to give up their town and they sent a messenger with a white flag to the King to ask him to save their lives The King said he would if they would send six men with ropes round their necks, to bring the keys of the town They did and he told some men to hang 'em. Then his wife begged him to save their lives.

### 5 Impersonation

I have never succeeded in popularizing this exercise with young children. The best approach to it is the dialogue. The example given below was presented by senior children, and is based on the familiar picture, 'When did you last see your father?' The dialogue form is good practice for the young dramatist.

*Example Dialogue in character.* Spoken by E. W., aged 12, and M. N., aged 11.

*Roundhead Officer.* When did you last see your father?

*Cavalier's Son.* A few days ago.

*R. O.* Was he with any one?

*C. S.* No, he was in the sitting-room.

*R. O.* How long did he stay in the house?

*C. S.* He stayed in the house about half an hour and then he went out, and I thought I heard voices under the window.

*R. O.* Did you see him go out?

*C. S.* Yes, I saw him go out.

*R. O.* Did he tell you where he was going?

*C. S.* No, he didn't say where he was going: he ate his breakfast and he didn't say a word.

*R. O.* Did he talk much to you when he went?

*C. S.* No, he didn't say anything.

*R. O.* Was he dressed in cavalier's uniform?

*C. S.* He had got the cavalier's uniform on when he went out of the room.

*R. O.* When your father went out had he a worried look on his face?

*C. S.* I didn't notice.

*Note.*—*R. O.* is evidently a born lawyer. He is at present on a milk round, and will probably become an errand boy, and read detective stories in his master's time.

I give another example of picture impersonation. It is



a useful variation of the somewhat uninteresting picture-description exercise. Millais' 'Boyhood of Raleigh' was used, and Raleigh's companion has suffered a change of sex, appearing in the dialogue as Cynthia Raleigh.

*Example A triangular conversation.* Spoken by  
E. W. 12, L. S. 12, W. T. 10

*Young Raleigh.* Which land did you like best in your travels ?

*Old Fisherman.* The West Indies

*Cynthia Raleigh.* What sort of food did you eat ?

*O. F.* We used the fruit *off* of the trees

*R.* What ship did you sail in to the West Indies ?

*O. F.* *Mary Ann*

*C. R.* Did it get wrecked when you went to the West Indies ?

*O. F.* It was according to which part of the country we were sailing to

*R.* Did you ever see any wild beasts in the West Indies ?

*O. F.* They were mostly tigers there

*C. R.* Did you ever have any *accidents* with them ?

*O. F.* Sometimes, but I mostly carried my gun about with me

*R.* Did you ever go to any other lands besides the West Indies ?

*O. F.* Yes, I went to South America, Spain, and Gibraltar

*C. R.* What sort of weapons did you use in the West Indies ?

*O. F.* Spears and rifles

*R.* When you went to Gibraltar did you see the guns facing out of the geranium beds ?

*O. F.* Yes

*C. R.* Which country did you like best ?

*O. F.* South America [Quite indifferent to his avowed preference for the W. Indies]

*R.* Which was the most fertile land of all ? [A reminiscence of the geography book]

*O. F.* South America

*C. R.* Did you get many currants to eat in the West Indies ?

*O. F.* Yes, we get them nearly every day.

*Note.*—It is impossible not to comment on this tale of moving accidents by field and flood. The Old Fisherman's impartiality as to where he is shipwrecked is as delightful as Cynthia's reference to the possibility of 'accidents' with tigers. Raleigh's query about the unusual appearance of the geranium beds at Gibraltar is explained (so I afterwards decided) by the boy's soldier father having done garrison duty on the rock during the recent war.

6. *Dumb Crambo*

This is a miming exercise. Its one disadvantage is that the sentences usually take too similar a form. Children enjoy it keenly, and I have included it for that excellent reason.

*Example. Making a pudding* Mimed by A. P., aged 12, described by E. S., aged 11.

Alice Phipps is making a pudding. She's putting the flour in. Now she's putting the fat in. She's mixing it together. She's putting the currants in and mixing it altogether. She's putting the fat round the tin. She's putting the cloth over it. She's tying it up. Now she's putting it in the saucepan to boil.

7. *Description of a Process*

It has been pointed out that the matter automatically arranges itself in this exercise. It may be mimed with a running description, or treated as a piece of remembered observation. The latter form is given below.

*Example. Mending a bicycle tyre.* Spoken by D. N., aged 10.

One day there was a lady walking by the house, with a bicycle. She asked me if I knew anybody that could mend a tyre. I said, 'We've got stuff indoors.' She asked me if I thought I could do it. I said 'yes'. I got the levers and took the outer cover off and then looked for the puncture. I couldn't find it, so I got some water in a bowl and put the tyre in. Then I saw the water begin to bubble. I took the inner tube out of the bowl and marked the place with some chalk. Then I got the sand paper and smoothed it. Then I put some French chalk on, I put the solution on the inner tube and on the patch and rubbed it till it was not quite dry. Then I stuck the patch to the inner tube, and let it dry. I put the inner tube back and blew it up.

*Note.*—This needs the pruning knife. D. N. has a ponderous delivery and a long tale to spin; in fact the somewhat irritating style of the old countryman. The opening is characteristic of this type of speaker, who will insist on reproducing all conversations verbatim.

8. *The Lecturette*

Time for preparation is needed if this exercise is to be successful. The subjects should be handed in by the class at

least a week before the lecturette is to be delivered. The subject-matter can be looked up in the school and public library, and talked over in the home. Such preparation is extremely valuable. It breeds a habit of ferreting out information, trains a child in the handling of books, and joins in a community of interest the parent, the child, and the teacher. It is wise to give marks, and to allow the audience to assess them. A good plan is to present the lecturer with twenty marks to start with. His critics mark him down for bad pronunciation, wrong constructions, and scantiness and bad arrangement of matter. At the end of the lecture, I ask for the lowest mark, and if the critic can satisfy the lecturer by giving chapter and verse that the marks have been fairly lost, his total is accepted.

*Example. A lecturette on Demobilization.* Spoken by E. W., aged 12.

Demobilization is very important. There's a lot of men out at the front waiting to be demobilized whom we should like at home. For instance there's the coal miners and the engine drivers, and those who are coming home to cultivate the land. Demobilization will be a great trouble. Before the men can come home to their ordinary work, they get their employers to sign some papers and send them to the War Office. Then the man himself will have to sign some papers. When he's signed them he'll send them in and receive a ticket. Then he will be sent to a camp near London. He'll wait there for a few days and then be sent home for a month with a month's rations and pay. When his furlough is up he will go to a camp near to a place where he lives. He will give up his overcoat, his bayonet, and his ammunition. Very likely they'll let him keep his soldier clothes and supply him with civilian clothes.

The miners and all men of national importance will come first. Those who have a trade will come next, and very likely the unmarried men will be last.

Assessed at 17 marks.

Marks lost for 'ome', 'tickut', 'frinistance'.

### 9. *Castles in Spain*

I have placed this exercise later than might be expected because, although actually a mental picture, yet in the working out it will be found much more suitable for senior than junior children. Young children do not describe their wants in detail very readily. They usually make a large

demand and leave the details to Providence. (For example, I have one small boy who when asked what he would like in his Christmas stocking said, 'A motor bus'.) And often, too, the young child has little or no thought of the future and what it may hold for him, so that it is not unusual for a seven-year-old to be quite uncertain about what he wants or if he wants anything at all. Senior children, on the other hand, with a very little encouragement, will become positively glib. Girls, in particular, will show a nice discrimination which often astonishes the mere male. In the examples given below, it will be noticed how much richer in detail is the senior girl's contribution than any of the others

*Example My new doll* Spoken by G. D., aged 7.

I should like a doll dressed in silk, with brown shoes and stockings. I should like its hair to be curly. I should like it to be double-jointed and with fair hair.

*Note*—A doll was chosen because girls of this age are often more interested in their doll's dresses than in their own.

*Example. A ball dress.* Described by I. N., aged 12.

My ball dress was made of white Crêpe de Chine. I wore it at a peace ball. It had little olive leaves worked on it in green silk. It had a square yoke with a square-shaped neck. The skirt was draped at the side. I wore an edging of white fur instead of a collar. I had white satin slippers and white silk stockings. I carried a white fan with green olive leaves painted on it.

*Example. My next suit.* Described by W. M., aged 11.

I should like a blue jacket and trousers which button at the knees. I should like a cap like the Technical School boys have.

*Note.*—I include this and the next piece of speech as an illustration of the diversity of outlook the mixed school teacher is called upon to deal with.

*Example. My aeroplane.* Described by A. C., aged 12.

My aeroplane is an Avro biplane. The body is about seven yards long and the wing span eleven feet. The wings are one and a half feet wide. It has four wheels and a long skidder in front. It has a Daimler engine and a four-bladed propeller. The exhaust pipes are made so that they go above the wings. It is a self-starter. I use about eight gallons of petrol in flying from here to Reading. It can go at a hundred miles an hour. It rises a thousand feet in five minutes. It has a special tank filled with paraffin under the top wing. The pipe for the air pressure is fixed on the struts. It can be steered by pedals.

It will be observed both in this and in other speech exercises that children tend to use the past tense. Speech in the past tense is almost always more fluent than in either of the other tenses. The present tense tends to stereotype the sentence forms (as in G. D.'s speech on the opposite page), with the result that the matter very quickly becomes cramped out of sympathy with the manner. The future tense is probably the most difficult of all for the child to use. It is certainly the most difficult to set exercises in. If speech composition in either future or present tense shows meagre, the child should be told to recast his speech, in the past tense. The pretence that the matter of speech relates to an accomplished fact is of great help to children, who invariably find it easier to look back than to look forward. Recasting tenses is a useful practice, but it is more successful as a writing than a speech exercise.

#### 10. *The Lessonette*

'Keeping school' is a popular outdoor pastime with girls. There is really no reason except a tradition broken by Pestalozzi and other courageous teachers, why lessons should not be prepared and given within the school walls. I do not necessarily advocate this in lessons other than speech lessons. Senior children might well pass on the fruits of their private reading to younger children as in the example given below.

*Example. The princes in the Tower.* Lessonette by L. S., aged 11, to class average age 8

We are going to talk about the princes in the Tower. There was a king named Edward IV and he had two sons, and later on their father died and he left his brother Richard Crookback in charge of his two sons. Edward V the elder boy was supposed to be king of England but Richard Crookback thought he would like to be king. So he shut the two poor little princes up in the Tower with their little dog. Richard thought he wouldn't be safe with the princes alive, so he sent two rough men to murder them. One night when the two princes were asleep 'locked in each other's arms', the two rough men were sent up stairs. One man refused to kill the princes for they had such a sad look on their faces. The other man who had a hard heart reminded him of the money that Richard Crookback was going to give them; and so the two men murdered the little princes by putting pillows over their faces so that they couldn't breathe. Then Richard told the people that they had died. They

were buried under some stones where for a hundred years they lay—the bodies lay—and some men who were digging, one day found some bones, and they were the princes' bones. Henry Tudor who was a prince fought Richard afterwards and he defeated his army and killed Richard and the crown rolled under a bush. So they took it from under the bush and crowned Henry Tudor King of England on the battlefield.

*Note* —'Locked in each other's arms' is a remembered phrase from the book out of which the matter was prepared. To those teachers who may feel that the elder children get their speech practice at the expense of the younger children's time, I would suggest that the natural simplicity of the narrative is a not insignificant set-off to the absence of the art and artifice which the adult teacher may bring to bear on his matter. Pictures were used.

## II. *Question Time*

This exercise has long been familiar in the schools as the post-box device. It has, however, been rather a speech exercise for the teacher than the child. The questions are usually written down, posted, and answered the next week. It is all to the good that the child's curiosity should be stimulated and satisfied. But why the questions should be put on paper, when all parties concerned are present in the flesh, is something of a mystery. The questioner, of course, should ask his question in open class, and so lay the common stock of information under contribution. He may get his answer from his fellows, or from a book which is recommended to him, or ultimately from his teacher.

Some of the posers which will inevitably be asked in 'question time' may well find the joints in the teacher's armour of infallibility, and this is no matter for regret. He will take a fair revenge in his own questions to his class and may be reflect sympathetically on the plight of many harassed parents who suffer from the curiosity of their importunate offspring. A record of proceedings should be kept in the question book.

On looking through this somewhat lengthy list of speech exercises (not yet complete) the busy teacher may perchance wonder how he is to find time for them. Actually speech exercises take up very little time, and many of

them find a legitimate place in most of the class subjects. Indeed, every lesson which calls for speech is a speech lesson, and there is an obligation on the specialist to see that the speech in his subject reaches a reasonable standard both in matter and manner. But there are considerations of practice which may well receive special mention. In the lower school oral expression naturally bulks larger than in the upper school. I believe that if no written composition at all was done in the lowest class there would be a gain in expression. Young children should redeem the time now wasted in writing unintelligible words, in extra reading and talking. When the written approach is begun and for long after, the class should be divided into a writing set, and a speech set. Both sets may very often work the same theme if it is thought desirable. In the next composition exercise the sets will change occupations. In this way the teacher halves his numbers for oral expression work, which is a valuable gain without losing any of his written work. A good deal of speech may be heard by the children themselves. A child with a good ear may help with the mechanical exercises, and the hearing of reproduction may often be entrusted to senior children. After every speech exercise, corrections should be collected from the class, and this oral correction should never be omitted. It breeds the valuable habit of listening to speech critically, and what is perhaps of equal importance with children, it emphasizes the existence of a speech standard. All this will take time; but time is not of the essence of the contract. By learning to speak with precision, says John Morley, 'you learn to think with correctness', and again 'Right expression is a part of character'. The school that cannot find time to seek and ensue these high aims, stands self-condemned.

## CHAPTER III

### THE DEBATE AND THE MORE FORMAL SPEECH EXERCISES

'Whether you judge the analytical invention of the first part of my Enthymene deficient *secundum quoad*, or *quoad minus*, give me your reasons'

'Let it be granted that a speech may be made on any subject and at any distance from that subject'

THE debate is a most valuable exercise, but the teacher needs a nice appreciation of its nature before he can realize its possibilities. It should be said at once that the school debating society does not concern the teacher overmuch. Debates may not be stage-managed as the school concert is stage-managed. Unless the debating society, once organized, can run itself, it were better to omit debating from the oral expression exercises. It is altogether too valuable to fall into the hands of the window-dresser, as handwork in many schools has done.

To begin with, the debate is an exercise in self-government. The members have their own rules and abide by them. Anything in the nature of dictation by outside authority converts the democracy into a shamocracy; and no one will feel this so quickly as the members themselves. This is not to say that the teacher has no part at all in debates. His help will be sought in the organization, and he may do well to take the chair at the first few meetings in order to show future chairmen how to conduct business. But when the society is once on its legs, he should claim no other than the rights of a private member, nay, he should resign himself to a masterly inactivity which no keen member would be content with.

What may we expect debate to do for the child? In this, as in so much of his work, the teacher must be content to see with the eye of faith. Apart from the very tangible advance towards the mastery of speech, we may reasonably hope for other and later fruiting. Some of our present discontents are doubtless due to the inarticulate condition



of the mass of the workers, and their lack of training in affairs. The late tribunals have witnessed, over and over again, the tragedy of a man with a genuine grievance who is unable to voice it and therefore unable to get it remedied. This is regrettable and not without danger to the community. Robert Lowe's advice to 'educate our masters' was never more needed than at present. The world, so we are assured, has been made safe for democracy. There are not wanting critics to observe, that democracy has yet to be made safe for the world.

What has all this to do with the consideration of debate as a speech exercise in schools? It ought to have a great deal. Debate illustrates the right of majorities to rule; it bestows the privilege and demands the service of citizenship: it accustoms the individual to weigh his own words and the words of others; it throws up the seeker for place, the mere malcontent, and the honest citizen, it does something to assess them at their true value; it offers no bribes for work well done; it rewards efficient work with more work. In the microcosm of school it may make something of a citizen out of every manling, and something of a manling out of every citizen. And if the training begun in the primary school is carried on in the continuation schools, as surely it will be, we may hope to send our future citizens to the poll with a somewhat clearer view of the vote than that of the elector who expressed his intention of voting for the 'cove' who had stood him 'arf a quartern of rum'.

At the preliminary meeting the main business will be to choose the officers. The question of rules is best left to stand over for a while. The really useful rules are those which grow of themselves out of the needs of the society. If the constitution is ready made before the society actually comes into being, there is the danger that it will either be imperfectly understood or treated as a mere convention. Rules framed to meet a proved need are much more likely to be kept. Rules should be few in number, and intelligible in wording. They should be entered at the beginning of the Minute Book. It will be necessary to elect a Chairman, a Secretary, and a small Committee on which both the Chairman and the Secretary will have a place by virtue of their office. The duty of the Chairman is to preside at

the meetings, to keep order, and to enforce the rules. He should jealously guard the good fame of the society, and hold aloof from party faction. The duty of the Secretary is to keep the books of the society, to give public notice of the subjects for debate, and to write up the agenda and minutes of meetings. The Committee will prepare the list of debates, and secure proposers and opposers. All the offices should be vacated at the end of the session, which will conveniently coincide with the school term.

Debates should follow the usual order of procedure—first private business, then public business. The House having assembled, the Chairman will immediately call upon the Secretary to read the Minutes of the last meeting. He will then ask for any questions arising from the Minutes, and these having been asked and answered, or failing any questions, he will further ask permission of the House to sign the Minutes as a correct record. Then follow questions to officers on matters relating to their official duties. He will rule out of order questions which are not pertinent or merely impertinent, and call on the officer named to answer such queries as he allows. He will then ask the Secretary if there is any correspondence relating to the affairs of the society, and so pass on to the election of new members and the close of private business. The Chairman's bell should be dispensed with. There is no need for its use in a small room, and too often it is a sign of impotence rather than authority. It should be clearly understood by all members, that when the Chairman takes the floor all other members resume their seats and give him an immediate hearing. If he has occasion to name a member for a breach of this rule, or any other flagrant misdemeanour, the House should stand adjourned until sentence of expulsion has been pronounced on the offender.

Public business having been opened, the Chairman will read the motion for debate, which the Secretary will have handed to him in writing before the meeting begins. He will then name the speakers in their proper order—proposer; opposer, and their supporters. 'Mr. Smith will speak first, Mr. Brown second, Mr. Jones third, Mr. Black fourth' is the usual formula. It should be said in passing, that the use of exact and time-honoured verbal formulae

is important. The Chairman will then leave Mr. Smith in possession of the floor. After the set speeches, which should have a time limit, he will declare the motion open to general discussion, and call on speakers for or against. No member will speak until he is named by the Chairman, but members are allowed to draw his attention to their desire for utterance, by standing in their places. When debate is well established, the Chairman will frequently be embarrassed by the number of would-be orators, but if volunteers are lacking, he must secure a quota of pressed men by naming members in public. If old boys, or other visitors are present, they should, out of courtesy, be given an opportunity to express their views. Voting on the motion will be confined to members. After allowing a reasonable time for the free expression of opinion, the Chairman will again read the terms of the motion and ask Mr. Secretary to take a count first of the 'Ayes', then of the 'Noes'. Lastly he will read out the result, declare the motion lost or carried, and adjourn the House.

### *The Mock Election*

The election should deal with municipal affairs, which will ensure the children speaking out of their knowledge and interest. Candidates for the vacant seats should be chosen by an open vote, and four candidates for two seats will provide the wholesome excitement of a contest. Candidates will be required to state their views to the electorate and to answer questions. I allow the rivals to deal with the same question in turn. This somewhat unconventional method gives the voter an opportunity of balancing the good will of the candidates before committing himself to a vote. Scrutineers should be appointed to check the voting and a returning officer to declare the result. The Chairman should be supplied with an Agenda as in debate, or a programme may be placed on the notice board as a guide to the whole meeting. If the contest can take place about the same time as the local elections it will add reality to the proceedings and provide the class with material for speech. Senior children are keenly interested in local affairs, and are rarely tongue-tied for lack of matter. A record of the proceedings, such as might well be drawn

up by the secretary of debates, will be useful in case of a re-election. If it is thought desirable to throw more speech on the voters, they may be required on recording their votes to state their reasons for according or withholding their support. Indeed, the value of the vote might well be emphasized by withholding it from those who could not show reason for their political faith. The teacher will do well to confine his activities in this exercise to putting his question, recording his vote, and perhaps advising candidates to meditate on Browning's advice to 'Willie' at the end of *The Pied Piper*, before promising new worlds to the electorate.

Mock elections make admirable combined speech and writing exercises. The candidates can issue electoral addresses; indignant letters voicing local grievances can be written for the local press; candidates can be interviewed by enterprising young journalists; and election leaflets prepared and circulated by ardent supporters. In schools where a prefect system is in working order, it might be possible to fill some of the less important offices by a free election, and the teacher who can so far forget himself as to hear school affairs discussed in public will get a view of his own school which will not fail of interest and perhaps of edification. I give below a programme, two speeches, and a selection from the questions

#### MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, Nov 23rd, 1918

##### LITTLEMORE DISTRICT COUNCIL

##### *Candidates*

North Ward. Ivy Newman (Lady), Edwin Wheatley (Milkman).

South Ward. Mary Varley (Lady), Leshe Collins (Gentleman).

Polling Station: Littlemore Mixed School.

Hours of Polling 11 a. m. — 12 noon.

ERNEST G. BULLER, Returning Officer.

*Election Speech* delivered by I. N., aged 12.

'Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to address you as a candidate for the North Ward. I hope you will all vote for me. One of the things I shall try to do is, to have the Mount pulled down and better houses built. I will have the ground on the side of the railway dug up for allotments. I think we should have a club for recreation and dancing.

In different parts of Littlemore the roads ought to be mended, especially by the Marlborough Arms. I also think that we should have a large shed put up on the Recreation Ground which would be useful in rainy weather. I hope you will vote for me.'

N B—The opening sentence was, of course, prepared for the occasion. The Mount is a very unlovely slum in the village.

*Election Speech* delivered by E. W., aged 12.

'If you vote for me I will try and do everything I can to please you. I shall try to get street lamps at every dark corner. I think we should have a Public Library. The city (Oxford) water should be brought up and hot water baths and electric light placed in the houses. I think there ought to be an alteration made in the Sandford Bathing Place, and sheds ought to be put up. Once again I ask you to vote for me.'

*Questions.*

Do you think there ought to be drains in Littlemore?

Do you think new schools ought to be put up?

Do you think the village Hall ought to be finished?

Other queries related to the need for more shops, another milkman, a free allowance of milk for poor mothers, an extra nurse, a resident doctor, a local speed limit, a telephone office, an extra teacher for the school, the cutting down of trees round the school garden, and the provision of a swimming-bath for girls.

#### THE DRAMATIC METHOD

There is no danger of the Dramatic Method being overlooked in present-day practice. It has become part of the law in most schools. The real danger, as it appears to me, lies in the teacher's forgetfulness of its pitfalls and limitations.

The Dramatic Method is said by its advocates in history teaching to add reality to the work and to fasten it on the memory. But before we can accept this as a working hypothesis, we ought to satisfy ourselves that nothing is subtracted in the addition, and if anything is lost, whether or no the loss is counterbalanced by the gain. The aim of history teaching is to present the past to the present. The presentation, as Froide laments in a famous passage, must always remain incomplete. 'Between us and them there is a great gulf fixed.' But a frail and temporary bridge

may be thrown over the gulf by those historians, of whom Froude was one, who know and use the arts of the poet. Like the Witch of Endor they speak a word of power, and the ghosts crowd round and about us at their bidding. To understand how this is done is to understand the nature of Art, which can make the symbol more real for us than the actual. But that it can be done, and done in a measure for children, is certain. Let the teacher make an experiment. Let him take such a piece of writing as Stanley's Murder of Becket, or Napier's Death of Sir John More, or Southey's account of Trafalgar, and read it to his class, without frittering away the power of the narrative by a running comment and explanation. The effect, if the reading is good and emotional, will be impressive. Sensitive children will be brought near to tears. Now present the scene dramatically. Becket's murder (I take the subject of my own experiment) will be received by actors and audience alike with undisguised amusement. The atmosphere—and good history teaching is largely the presentment of correct atmosphere—will be falsified and debased. Imagination, by which alone we possess the past, will be overpowered by the crude realism of history in action. In grasping at the substance you have lost even the shadow. Do the spectators contemplate life, as presented to them by the actors, 'with appropriate emotions'? This question is the test which should be applied to every dramatic presentation in history teaching. And the answer is some measure of the value of the method.

But, says the dramatic enthusiast, there is the stimulus to memory to be considered. It is probably true that a dramatic presentation does take strong hold of the memory. This, however, may be a matter for regret rather than congratulation. Moreover, the historical memory is stored in a variety of ways, of which the dramatic method is only one. Even the kind of teaching which, as Green said, made history about as interesting as an old almanac, was a notable exercise for the memory, furthermore, the question at issue is not so much whether we are to sleep undisturbed over Mangnall, as whether we are to suffer the nightmare with Mr. Cook.

Consider, too, the real nature of children's acting. It is, except in quite abnormal cases, imitative rather than

creative. There is no warrant for supposing that every child is a born actor. The child acts the teacher, or the soldier, or the carter, because these are within his experience. If you present him with facts outside that experience, and expect him to create a character and improvise a dialogue, you must not be surprised if his acting is wooden and his dialogue scanty. Even the professional actor, who has his material supplied to him by the dramatist, has to take infinite pains to create character; as the late H. B. Irving lamented, one does not meet 'types of Hamlet and Othello in every street'. The scantiness of impromptu dialogues is in fact so commonly felt to be a defect, that a remedy has been devised which is very frequently worse than the disease. Books of historical dialogues are used in many schools, dialogues which are too often poor drama and worse history. It is true that the more intelligent teachers encourage the actors to write their own words, and certainly this is to be preferred to the use of machine-made stuff. But even this method is not altogether satisfactory. Children have not sufficient historical background (few people have) to present anything but a caricature of character and incident, even when they possess the necessary flair for dramatic writing.

Dramatic presentation in the literature lesson is not quite in the same case. To begin with, there is little or no difficulty with atmosphere, and the printed dialogue is not nearly so objectionable, although too many children's plays and sketches are written in that variety of English, rather unkindly known as 'schoolmaster's'. But children should write their own plays. It is an excellent exercise and gives useful opportunities for team work. A comment on the growing practice of presenting Shakespeare dramatically in schools is not out of place here. It is an open question whether Shakespeare (except the songs) can be profitably treated at all in elementary schools. Certainly the study of an emasculated Shakespeare, mauled by the commentator, and mangled by the grammarian, is 'tedious for the master, hard for the scholar, cold and uncomfortable for them both', as Ascham said about a very similar business. But the attempt to present a live Shakespeare dramatically may turn out to be as big a blunder as the attempt to present a dead Shakespeare grammatically.

A dramatic presentation of Shakespeare focuses the attention primarily on the action, and not on the poetry. Certain sensitive ears will undoubtedly thrill to the faint blowing of the horns of Elfland. But the generality, both of audience and players, will be agog for the alarums and excursions, for the fighting and foining, which Shakespeare provides in such abundance for the groundlings. That is, their attention will concentrate rather on the playwright than the poet. The appeal of the drama is not to the inward eye by which we have a share in the poet's vision, but to the outward eye which can only believe what it sees; the appeal is not to the inward ear, which is able to make music of the 'unheard melodies' of the poet, but to the outward ear which hears the real only, not the ideal. When you read Shakespeare, the free imagination builds its own images, when you see Shakespeare, the imagination has alien images foisted on it, which may be inferior in power and subtlety to your own, but which, so much are we in bondage to our senses, will inevitably possess your mind for the time being. This is Lamb's position. 'When the novelty' (that is, of dramatic representation) 'is past, we find to our cost that instead of realizing an idea, we have only materialized and brought down a fine vision to the standard of flesh and blood.' Dr. Johnson, in his downright way, is even more emphatic. 'No, sir,' he tells Boswell, 'the best of Shakespeare's plays cannot be acted' Truly it is a strange heresy, as Professor Raleigh observes, which can be maintained by two such critics. And Professor Saintsbury, while stoutly affirming that neither acting nor even teaching can entirely spoil Shakespeare, holds to the same view.

#### THE MOCK TRIAL

The mock trial is full of interest, it admits of a large cast, and incidentally it is a lesson in citizenship. On these grounds it may reasonably claim a place in speech exercises.

It is advisable to give a preparatory lesson, dealing quite simply with procedure. The court should be set in a convenient and proper manner, and the trial correct in detail with the single omission—for obvious reasons—of the witnesses' oath. The 'red judge' trial, which empanels a jury, gives most speech practice. The case may employ:



the judge, counsel for prosecution, witnesses for the prosecution, counsel for prisoner, witnesses for prisoner, prisoner himself, foreman and eleven jurors, clerk of court, usher, warder, constable, and official reporter.

The charge may be decided on at the end of the lesson on procedure and counsel briefed, in order that evidence may be collected and witnesses primed before the trial begins. The indictment and order of procedure should be posted by the secretary of debates on the class notice board some days ahead. Copies of the exact verbal formula should be supplied to all who will need them. The trial scene in *Pickwick* might be read to the class in addition to the lesson on procedure. Even more useful, because it lends itself so readily to dramatization, is the trial of the Knave of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland*. If the characters in *Alice* sustain the same rôle in the Mock Trial, they will bring to their parts some knowledge of when and how to speak. The trial before magistrates and without a jury is another useful preparation for the criminal trial. There is scarcely need to discuss the procedure here; a visit to the local police courts will be more useful than pages of reading. But a brief *résumé* of the order of criminal trial may be found useful. In the following account, needless technicalities such as Grand Juries and True Bills have been avoided, and in the interest of speech there are some few adaptations from correct legal procedure.

The first step in the trial of a prisoner is the pleading. He is called by name into the dock, and the indictment is read to him by the Clerk of Court for the purpose of letting both prisoner and Judge know what charge is preferred. A simple and substantially correct form of indictment is:

J S prisoner at the bar, is charged in that he did on the 23rd day of November in the year of Our Lord one thousand and twenty, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, kill and murder one F P. (Fat Porker) against the peace of our Lord the King, his Crown and dignity. Do you, J. S. plead Guilty, or Not Guilty.

If the prisoner pleads Guilty, the trial comes to a summary end and the judge proceeds to pass sentence, so that he must be instructed to plead Not Guilty. Then the jury is empanelled and the prisoner 'given into their charge'.

The Clerk of Court reads out the names of the jurymen, and when they are all present addresses them as follows :

Gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner stands indicted by the name of J S, for that he on the       day of       in the year of our Lord feloniously did [as in the indictment] Upon this indictment he has been arraigned, and upon his arraignment he has pleaded that he is Not Guilty Your charge therefore is to inquire whether he be Guilty or Not Guilty, and to hearken to the evidence

Now the trial commences. The counsel for the prosecution, who will have prepared his brief beforehand, opens the case, and states the facts shortly and clearly. He next calls his witnesses to prove the truth of what he has said and—in a court of law—gets their evidence from them in the form of question and answer This is too difficult for children, and the witnesses must be allowed to tell their story in their own way. Witness may be sworn by the Clerk of Court in some such doggerel as this :

Now, witness, I put it to you,  
To say what you know to be true.  
If the truth you don't know,  
Just say so and go,  
But if truth you can tell,  
Speak up clearly and well.

After witnesses for the prosecution have been heard, counsel for the defence may either call his witnesses first, or make his speech first, and then call witnesses. When the defence is completed, the Judge, who has been taking notes during the progress of the trial, sums up, in a speech reviewing the chief facts on both sides and addressed to the jury. When he has finished, the Clerk of the Court invites the jury to consider their verdict. The jurymen put their heads together and hold a whispered colloquy. If it is inconvenient, they need not retire to make up their mind. When the Foreman of Jury stands up as a sign that the jury are agreed upon their Verdict, the Clerk of the Court says :

' Gentlemen, have you agreed on your verdict ? '

The Foreman replies ' Yes '.

The Clerk then says ' Do you find the prisoner Guilty or Not Guilty ? ' If the verdict is Not Guilty, the prisoner is discharged by the Judge. If the verdict is Guilty, the judge addresses himself to the prisoner, and proceeds to pass sentence. So ends the Mock Trial.

## CHAPTER IV

### READING

' Culture is reading '  
' To read well is a noble exercisc.'

It is necessary to distinguish two objects in teaching children to read. First, we wish to put them in possession of the power of gaining pleasure and profit from the printed page. Secondly, we aim at giving our pupils a technique both accurate enough to turn the cold print into correct sound and to render its logical content, and expressive enough to make audible the beauty of words and their emotional significance.

The old-time reading lesson almost completely disregarded the first of these aims, and made but a lame pursuit of the second. During the very natural reaction which set in a few years ago, reading as an end to information, which in practice means silent reading, was emphasized at the expense of reading aloud. In a sane English scheme, both aims will be kept in mind, and because present-day teachers are still in the backwash of the reaction spoken of above, the peculiar need of the time is a new conception of the art of reading aloud.

It is no part of the business of this book to discuss methods of teaching the first steps in reading. No one method is infallible; and progress in reading depends more upon the strength of the desire to learn, upon the frequency of practice, upon the suitability and variety of the reading matter both in the school and in the home, than upon fanatical devotion to a method.

I have suggested that the art of reading aloud stands in need of a fresh consideration. The old style reading lesson had little to recommend it save tradition. There was no guarantee that the sense of the passage was apprehended by the reader; there was little or no attempt made to realize the possibilities of reading as a creative art (the so-called reading with expression was very often the merest

mechanical imitation), and there was a great deal of weariness and utter boredom. With the introduction of silent reading, reading aloud tended to disappear from the senior school. I am concerned in this chapter to show that reading aloud has an indispensable function to fulfil in the schools, and that it is at least as important in the senior classes as in the junior, although for different reasons.

It will be necessary at the outset to make some distinction between the two uses of language—to inform and to persuade. As fire gives out light and heat, so language radiates intellectual light and emotional warmth. The page of the man of science is an instance of the use of language for information; the page of the poet, and often the prose artist, is an instance of the use of the language of emotion, and didactic poetry does not destroy this distinction, since it is a poetic changeling and not of the true stock. And there are, corresponding to the two uses of language, two kinds of reading. There is the reading which stirs the emotions, and the reading which exercises the intellect. The reading which is designed—above all other—to stir the emotions, whether of the reader or of the auditor, is reading aloud. The reading which most expeditiously conveys the thought of the author is silent reading. Reading aloud in the school should be, in the main, emotional reading, although there are of course, particularly in lower classes, by-products involved, such as accurate pronunciation and practice in the recognition of new words. Silent reading should be, in the main, informative reading, although an emotional appeal will be felt in the silent reading of a story book. The whole matter is really decided by the aim of the reading lesson. When we wish our pupils to feel the rhythm of prose and poetry, and to attempt word-music, we shall practise them in reading aloud. When we wish to put their minds in the closest contact with the mind of the writer, we shall direct them to read silently.

Much is to be said about what I have called the by-products in reading aloud. It is plain that in silent reading the teacher will not know whether all the words are sounded correctly, or even whether (in the case of hard words) a pronunciation is attempted at all. The teacher will need the reading-aloud lesson, because it affords a test by which

the pupil's progress in the matter of pronunciation may be measured. In senior classes an occasional reading aloud of matter beyond the class range may perhaps do something to prevent the child making rather humiliating mistakes in pronunciation after his school days are over. I well remember a boy asking for 'Makalay's' (Macaulay's) *Essays* in a big public library and being corrected by a kindly but tactless librarian, much to the amusement of the bystanders and the discomfiture of the boy. The teacher will also need to satisfy himself that some attempt is made by the child to gather the drift of the passage read aloud. A young child is so absorbed in pronouncing the words, that unless he is exercised in realizing the sense simultaneously with reproducing the sound, the sense will remain unrealized. It is a good plan to require children to listen to a reading and afterwards to question the reader on the subject-matter of the passage; the exercise may be varied by directing the reader to question his audience. In order to make this a real test, the matter must be unseen. Mistakes in pronunciation should not be corrected by a show of hands. Habitual class correction induces in the reader a foolish habit of relying on providence to solve his difficulties. It directly invites his audience to look for spots on the sun, and is fatal to that atmosphere of encouragement which is so necessary in reading aloud in junior classes. And class correction tends to throw an altogether exaggerated importance on single words, which are dictionary units, not speech units. The reader should be encouraged to acquire the habit of making shots at the hard words, and even if the shots go wide, we shall be content with the knowledge that he is aiming at the correct target, which is the phrase and not the word.

*Phrasing is of the highest importance.* In reading aloud, just as in the playing of music, correct phrasing is indispensable to the correct understanding of the matter. In the printing of a music score, devices are adopted to outline the phrase, and to mark them off one from the other. In the printed matter of the school reader, no such help is given, although some system of phrase marks would be invaluable, especially to beginners. Punctuation is not really helpful. It is too insignificant to the eye of the child, and what is a much more radical defect, it is very

often opposed to a good phrasing. What is there to prevent the use of ( ) as in music ; or if that is inconvenient in printing (it is certainly awkward at the end of lines), why not | as in 'He next told them how he had shot some monstrous birds | and had caught a wild bull alive | and had conquered Hippolyta the warlike queen of the Amazons|'? Unmarked matter would always be available for phrasing unseens

But failing help from the printer, how are we to secure phrasing in the reading aloud of young children? Good phrasing in prose depends upon the recognition of rhythm. A phrase is really a rhythmic burst. Consider the passage, 'Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles. They were stronger than lions' The bursts of rhythm will be found to carry the voice on in a series of natural phrases. Rhythmical phrasing is common enough in children's speech, and good reading is akin to good speech. A child will naturally say, 'I had to stay at home

because baby swallowed a halfpenny.' He will not read like this without a good deal of practice, intelligently directed by the teacher. It must be admitted that the rhythms of good prose are so subtle, and their rendering depends so much upon the reader using his eye in advance of his voice, that rhythmical reading will always remain the accomplishment of the skilled reader rather than the practice of the majority. But the use of a phrase sign, by enabling the eye to recognize in advance the length of the rhythmic phrase, would be of real service to the beginner. The whole question of rhythm in prose and verse is constantly being agitated by scholars in a most technical and not very helpful fashion. It is sufficient for our purpose if we learn to recognize rhythm and try to outline it in our reading.

Then there is phrasing for mental pictures. If the images raised in the mind are rendered as a series of phrases, one phrase to one image, a rule for phrasing will be set up. Obviously the rule will break down when the matter is not pictorial, but a good deal of the reading matter provided for children, especially in the lower classes, does, or should, contain a wide range of pictures. In order to realize what

is meant by a mental picture, children may be called upon to see in their mind's eye a person, an object, or a place, and then to describe the mental picture which may be expanded or corrected by other members of the class in turn as a guarantee that they, too, have made the picture. The next step is to call on them to see the images raised in a short reading by the teacher. 'And anon there came in a dove | at a window | and in her mouth | was a cup of gold | And forthwithal there was upon the table | all manner of meats and drinks | O Jesu | said Sir Lancelot | what may this mean |.' In a reading by a young child, shorter phrases, as indicated by the bars, would be accepted. After the teacher has phrased passages for pictures, he may call on individuals to isolate the mental pictures in their own reading aloud. Obviously the same difficulty arises in the practice of young children when phrasing for pictures as arises when phrasing for rhythm, unless the child can complete the picture without unduly pausing over individual words, the phrase will have its back broken. With young children it is essential, if the teacher is resolute to secure reading for phrases, that they should be allowed time to con over the matter silently, in order to decide on the pronunciation of hard words before being called upon to read them. Naturally the teacher will offer to help individuals with the pronunciation during this preparation. And it may be found necessary with very young children to practise them in repeating phrases with their eyes on the teacher and not on the book, when the words will be found to run much more smoothly than would otherwise be the case. A set of readers based on the principle of phrasing for pictures is published by J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., and in some of the extracts the phrases are barred. If barred reading matter is used, care must be taken that the voice is not automatically lowered at the end of each phrase.

*Emphasis in Reading.* Due emphasis in reading aloud is secured when emphatic words are stressed in a degree according to their importance. It is interesting to remember that Milton adopted an ingenious device to prevent the careless reader from missing emphatic pronouns. In his own corrections among the 'Errata' prefixed to the first edition occurs, 'Lib. 2. v. 414, for *we* read *wee*.' It seems





Some mention has already been made of intonation or pitch in the chapter on the speech exercises of children. A common fault in reading (it is almost a national habit) is to end sentences on a falling cadence, with the result that the closing words are often inaudible. The habit is especially fatal when the sting of the sentence lies in the tail, and it is the chief cause of monotonous reading. It will be found useful with young children to visualize inflections if objectionable intonation (such as the above) is taking root in the class as,

He did not believe that naturally ugly voices really existed.

Or,

fleece

Its  
was white as snow.

Voice pitch varies with the subject-matter. The middle of the voice is best suited to ordinary declamation, and it is the safest pitch for an unseen reading. It would be futile to lay down hard and fast rules in the matter of intonation. An individual and intelligible reading is what we desire in our reading-aloud lesson, and intonation is good or bad in proportion as it helps or hinders the ideal we have before us. Provincial intonations are difficult to deal with. It is especially important that children living in districts where a peculiar intonation is strongly marked, should have opportunities of hearing good models, which means that teachers must be mindful of their own intonation. Those who speak much and often, run a peculiar risk of developing irritating mannerisms in intonation, mannerisms which they would recognize as defects in a third person, and which they believe themselves wholly free from. It is not an easy matter to preserve a pleasant conversational tone when speaking or reading to an audience, and the teacher must listen to his own voice critically, if he would have others listen to it pleasurably.

I must now make a considerable return in order to deal with the question of reading aloud as emotional reading. Literature (so it appears to me) will only take its rightful place as the most potent agent for culture in the school curriculum, the most delightful of the 'studies that serve for delight', when the approach to it is made through the

emotions, rather than through the intellect. Chardin's famous saying, 'One does not paint with colours, one paints with feeling,' is not more true of painting than it is of literature, and feeling is as much the basis of appreciation as it is the genesis of creation. Rossetti's assertion that great poetry demands fundamental brain-work, and the painter's well-known recipe for mixing colours 'With brains, Sir!' emphasize the meaning that Art has for the intellect, and present another aspect of the whole truth about Art. But it is Chardin's view that should be stressed in the schools. We should make the frankly emotional appeal if we would have our children love poetry. It is very doubtful whether they do so at present. The school journey appears to stop short even of the lower slopes of Parnassus. Why should this be? There are sufficient reasons. The poet has been very commonly buried alive under a dust-heap of notes, allusions, and grammatical exercises. And poetry is too rarely read aloud in the schools, and when it is read aloud, it rarely receives an adequate rendering. It is possible for an adult to hear the music of poetry in a silent reading, just as it is possible for a trained musician to hear a melody from a music score. It is hardly possible for children to hear with the eye, and even with adults, the majority may not acknowledge the full power and beauty of verse until they hear it actually sounded. Moreover, much fine poetry is a cry, an exultation, a rapture of the spirit, and declares itself most fittingly through the human voice. I have attempted in the next section to set down some considerations which may be of use to the teacher when he faces his class, intent to lead them into the magic circle. The following paragraphs anticipate—quite consciously—the chapter on Appreciation, and should be read in connexion with that chapter.

What are the essentials which make up an adequate rendering of poetry? No rendering can be allowed satisfactory which does not give a measure of expression to the charm of the sound, the movement of the words, the mood of the subject. *Poetry is to be read for the charm of sound.* It has already been pointed out that the poets themselves (with the notable exception of Browning, who appears to have read as a philosopher even what he wrote as a poet) read for music; and in this matter they are to be trusted.

Music in poetry is to be heard in rhyme, in alliteration, in the consonance of vowel combinations. Rhyme in Milton's disparaging definition is the 'jingling sound of like endings', but in fine poetry it is much more than that. The quality of vibration which all words have in common, and which is set free in a reading aloud, is sustained and reinforced by the chiming of the rhymed words. In a musical reading of

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?  
O stay and hear your true love's coming.

the rhymes tune the whole melody to a more delicious sweetness, as will be readily admitted if the lines are read,

O mistress mine, where are you wending?  
O stay and hear your true love's chanting

Verse music culminates in the rhymed words, and if they are not sounded (and even exaggerated if it be done delicately) the tonal beauty of the whole passage may be destroyed. And rhymes should not be over-run. If you read,

By the margin, willow veil'd,  
Glide the heavy barges  
trailed By slow horses;  
and unhailed The shallop fitteth silken sailed  
Skimming down to Camelot.

you put the music of the whole passage under the mute, as well as destroying the rhythmic pattern, which is quite another matter, and one of equal importance. Consider again,

Open afresh your round of starry folds,  
Ye ardent marigolds  
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,  
For great Apollo bids,  
That in these days your praises should be sung  
On many harps which he has lately strung.  
And when again your dewiness he losses,  
Tell him I have you in my world of blisses.

This is as musical as Apollo's lute, but if the rhymes are over-run in reading, not even Apollo could make good the loss of melody. Across the verse structure, rhymes call to each other as a bird calls to its mate; and in good reading, call and answer will stand out clearly. I have laboured this point somewhat because children, in reading verse aloud, are often urged to run over the rhymes in a vain pursuit of

the sense. Moreover, the regularly recurring pause which the reader is constrained to make when he marks the rhymes, is in itself of the nature of music. This is what Mozart meant when, speaking of the sister art, he said that the most important thing in music was, no music. The melody sings again in the silence. It is especially important to make a lengthy pause between stanza and stanza, in order that the stanza pattern may be heard in its isolation. Feminine rhymes need a delicate rendering. The last syllable must not tail off into nothingness, but receive its full value, as in Laurence Binyon's

In the time of wild *roses*,  
As up Thames we *travelled*,  
Where mid water weeds *ravelled*  
The lily *uncloses*

When rhymes ride on the crest of the line, as in

Now dewy nights *again* and *rain* in gentle *shower*  
At root of tree and *flower* has quenched the winter's drouth,

they must be marked out, or the peculiar charm of the artifice will be lost. And in middle rhymes,

Nor dim nor *red*, like God's own *head*,  
The glorious sun uprist,  
Then all *averred* I had killed the *bird*  
That brought the fog and mist  
'Twas right, said *they*, such birds to *slay*  
That bring the fog and mist.

the same care should be taken.

And then there is the charm of alliteration. When the poet leads off neighbouring words with the same letter, or builds up the tone of a passage by using closely related vowel sounds, his line gains in intensity of tone without—if the alliteration is skilfully conceived—tiring the ear with monotonous repetition. The delightful ringing effect which artistic alliteration produces should be observed and marked in reading aloud. Tennyson and Swinburne (both, perhaps, inclined to be a little self-conscious in the use of this device) are rich in alliterative harmonies.

and

The lustre of the long convolvuluses,  
Murmuring of innumerable bees.

And Swinburne :

Far off *westward*, *whither* sets the sounding strife,  
 Strife more sweet than *peace*, of shoreless *waves* whose *glee*  
 Scorns the shore and loves the *wind* that leaves them free,  
 Strange as sleep and pale as death and fair as *life*,  
 Shifts the *moonlight* coloured *sunshine* on the sea

Alliteration is native in English verse, and its happiest effects are achieved by a sort of natural growth rather than a conscious grafting, however skilfully done.

The music made by the interplay of vowel sounds, affords a working illustration of the great principle of Variety which is common to all the arts. It is everywhere in fine poetry ; in fact, it constitutes, with other things added, the making of poetry. It follows that vowels must be sounded sonorously (this does not mean heavily), o's must be open, a's pure, and ee's and u's sustained. And the vocalization must be smooth and even deliberate. Nothing debases the true metal of poetry so much as a clipped speech. Bring out the vowels and clear the consonants in

. . . . . daffodils

That come before the swallow dares, and take  
 The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim,  
 But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
 Or Cytherea's breath

and you will have a more genuine music than many a song will afford. In the child's own reading aloud, he should be taught to give rhymes their full value, and the teacher who possesses an ear for word music may frequently have cause to be grateful to the child, and will not be remiss in expressing his gratitude. It may be objected that the child voice is not adequate to sound the music of the poet. Granted that there is music in the poets of a gravity and weight which is more effectively rendered by the mature voice, I believe that children's ears are quick to catch, and their voices apt to render, a great deal of the word music in verse. And there are poems which appear to have been written for the child voice, the *Milking Song* in ' *High Tide on the coast of Lincolnshire* ', for example. Of course, they must be trained to listen ; and every poetry reading by the teacher should be an ear exercise for the child. A begin-

ning may be made by assessing single words for beauty of sound. Even young children will readily admit that 'melodious' is more grateful to the ear than 'zigzag', and they will supply illustrations without much difficulty. 'Isabella' was suggested to me as a euphonious name, 'angry', 'ugly', and 'nasty' as unpleasant sounding words.

Mention must be made of echo passages in poetry. The mimicry which the voice may legitimately use in rendering such lines as Barnefield's on the nightingale,

Fie, fie, now would she cry,  
Tereu, tereu, by and by

or the bird notes in

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling.  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud, (The rook notes)  
They were crying and calling.

should be suggestive rather than literal. A certain amount of exaggeration is allowable in a first reading of echo passages to young children, and I think a case can be made out (I speak here of the child's own reading) for the simultaneous rendering of passages which would gain in effect if the tone were strengthened—the tournament scene in *The Princess* is a case in point. Quite interesting effects in reading aloud can be secured by a combination of individual and simultaneous reading. Thus in 'Paul Revere's Ride',

*Now soft on the sand*, NOW LOUD on the LEDGE  
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides,

the chorus can create the suggestion of loud hoof-beats much more effectively than the solo voice, and secure by contrast the pianissimo effect of 'soft on the sand'. The refrain in 'Drake's Drum', although not technically a case of onomatopoeia, lends itself quite naturally to simultaneous reading, as do the refrains of Masefield's sea chanties, Browning's Cavalier Songs, and his sea chanty in *Paracelsus*, and much battle poetry in Scott. I do not advocate the simultaneous rendering of verse without the most careful discrimination by the teacher to decide as to what may legitimately be read in chorus; but it is a pity to ignore

the possibilities of class reading, both in poetry and prose, merely because it has been abused in the past.

*The verse rhythm is not to be destroyed in rendering poetry*  
Those who have had the good fortune to hear fine poetry beautifully rendered (the opportunities, alas, are few) will be aware of the poignant appeal of rhythm. Rhythm is at the heart of poetry, and without it there can be no poetry. This is indeed inevitable when one considers man's need for, and love of rhythmical movement, through which he found, and still finds emotional expression, whether it be in the rhythm of music, dancing, poetry, or the passive arts. Rhythm is fundamental. It floods the channels of poetry as the waters cover the sea. But the setting free of a verse-rhythm in reading aloud is by no means a simple affair. To begin with, the ability to reproduce rhythm varies a great deal with individuals, although I do not believe it is ever altogether absent. Again, it is of the nature of verse (and in this it stands above a good deal of music) to carry a double rhythm—the verse rhythm and the sense rhythm. Moreover, since in fine poetry the two rhythms are not identical, the interlacing of the two so as not to violate the sense on the one hand, nor to destroy the verse pattern on the other, is a nice matter. In the teacher's own reading to his class, preparation will be advisable in order that the necessary compromise between the sense stress and the verse stress may be effected. But if the adequate rendering of verse rhythms demands both study and aptitude, certainly we may avoid, and our children may avoid, gross violations of the rhythmic pattern, such as, for example, running over the ends of lines. This quite common practice results, as we have seen, from a mistaken effort to catch up and complete the sense which the break at the end of the line threatens to disorganize; but it should not be forgotten that whatever poetry may be, it is assuredly not a series of logical statements. It has been pointed out that a non-stop line occasions loss of melody, by obscuring the rhyme; its rhythmical effect is to break down the measured rhythm of verse into the free rhythms of prose. Morris's early work well illustrates the breathless bumpy movement, which a frequent use of enjambment gives to verse. It was a mannerism with him to join up even stanzas, with (to my

ears) the most unhappy results. In *Geffray Teste Noire*, for example,

And underneath, with glimmering of suns  
The primroses are happy, the dews lick [End of stanza]

The soft green moss 'Put cloths about your arms.'

Tennyson was of the opinion (and it may well hearten the diffident) that if his poetry was read aloud naturally and intelligently the rhythm would present no difficulty. Browning was of the opinion (and this, too, may fortify the fearful) that his poetry, with the exception of 'Hervé Riel' and poems of a similar nature, could not be read aloud at all!

In presenting poetry to children, a rhythmic outline is quite essential. It is best to begin with simple and strong rhythms, such as

Up the airy mountain,  
Down the rushy glen  
Waken, lords and ladies gay,  
On the mountain dawns the day  
Lock the door, Larston,  
Lion of Liddesdale.

Pattern reading by the teacher of strongly contrasted rhythms will be most helpful. Such a contrast, for example, as between

He rose at dawn and fired with hope  
Shot o'er the seething harbour bar,  
And reached the ship and caught the rope  
And whistled to the morning star. (*Allegro Impetuoso*)

and

Fair is her cottage in its place,  
Where yon broad water sweetly slowly glides.  
It sees itself from thatch to base  
Dream in the sliding tides. (*Andante affettuoso*)

will do more to make children feel rhythm and be of more help in their own efforts after rhythmical reading, than a merely verbal explanation.

It will be found that children seize on a verse rhythm with avidity, and some children will accompany their reading and reciting with quite spontaneous bodily movements. Tennyson has recorded the strange and haunting effect which the line 'Over the hills and far away' had



over him in boyhood. He delighted, no doubt, in the easy effortless rhythm of the phrase, although there is in addition a subtle suggestion of romance which would appeal to an imaginative boy. I should like to feel assured that at least one member of my classes carried in his heart at least one example of fine rhythm when school days are over. It would be still more pleasant to feel that the strong and joyous rhythm of

O the month of May, the merry month of May,  
So frolic, so gay, and so green, so green !  
O, and then did I unto my true love say,  
Sweet Peg, thou shalt be my Summer's Queen !

for example, might in maturity be preferred to the strained rhythms of rag time and jazz tune. Experience will convince the teacher of English that poetry is shorn of its wings when it is not presented rhythmically ; and in practice this means that the sense rhythm and the verse rhythm must be adjusted and not cancelled out, as they so often are. Sir T. Browne, an acknowledged master of prose rhythm, has a pregnant saying. 'Some, whose temper of body humours the constitution of their souls, are born poets ; though indeed all are naturally inclined unto rhythm.'

*Emphasis in Poetry.* The question of emphasis may very naturally be dealt with here, because emphatic words modify rhythm, and frequently (especially if they occur in the early part of a line) introduce a cadence. There is a kind of emphasis which Hamlet would have us avoid and which is quite commonly met with in the schools. It is the peculiar characteristic of what is called dramatic reading and it is fatal to an artistic rendering of poetry. It is frequently heard in Mrs. Hemans's verse, once very familiar to teachers and children. She was particularly addicted to underlining her pronouns, and many misguided attempts have been made to galvanize verse into life out of respect for Mrs. Hemans's pronouns. In the reading of verse, any kind of emphasis which disorganizes either the melody or the rhythm, or both, is to be avoided ; and this is what dramatic reading very commonly does. The question of when emphasis is called for is largely determined by the reader's power of interpretation of the

matter. There are various ways by which emphasis may be secured, and the selection of the particular method is a matter of discrimination on the part of the reader

Emphasis in verse may be effected either by retarding or accelerating a passage. Prospero's speech is an example of the emphasis of *accelerando* :

And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself (*Accelerando*)

and the end of the speech supplies an example of the reverse method :

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep (*Rallentando*)

It will be observed that there is a very natural raising of pitch as the rate is quickened, and a corresponding lowering of tone as the words slowly ebb into silence. Variation of pitch without any alteration of the rate is in itself sufficient to secure emphasis, as in the strongly contrasted passages in *Lycidas* :

Bid Amaranthus all his beauty shed,  
And Daffadillies fill their cups with tears,  
To strew the Laureat Herse where Lycid lies.  
For so, to interpose a little ease,  
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.

which needs a high pitch and a suave tone ; and the immediate context written in that sonorous full-throated organ note which is the great glory of Milton :

Ay me ! Whilst thee the shores and sounding seas  
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled ;  
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,  
Where thou, perhaps, under the whelming tide,  
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world.

It will be noticed that both these passages are examples of echo-writing. When repetition occurs, the key word or phrase should be stressed, as in

Gôld on her head, and gôld on her feet,  
And gôld where the hems of her kirtle meet,  
And a gôlden gurdle round my sweet,  
Ah ! qu'elle est belle la Marguente.

and in many stanzas of Smart's Hymn to David. And if it is thought necessary the emphasis can be strengthened by increasing the stress at each repetition.

Break ! Break ! Break !  
On thy cold grey stones, O sea.

is an example of the emphasis of repetition joined to the emphasis of the pause. The emphasis which is marked by a pause is especially strong if the emphatic word coincides with the verse accent, as in

Tóil for the brave.

A pause is necessary when an emphatic word introduces a cadence, as in

Sweet—are the uses of adversity.

There are some emphatic effects (chiefly onomatopoeic) which are only secured by a strong and almost continuous marking of the verse accent, as

His bridle reins were gólden chains,  
And with a mártial clánk  
At each léap he could féel his scábbard of stéel  
Smiting his stállion's fláink

*Lastly, Poetry is to be read with an appreciation of its mood.* 'The heart of man is the province of poetry' says Lord Macaulay in the essay on Byron; and the brimming over of the full heart of the poet is recorded in the varying moods of poetry. For the poet, the mood begets the poem, for his audience, the poem should beget the mood. But it can only do so if it is read in an appropriate spirit. If 'La Belle Dame' is presented in the same manner as 'Home for the holidays here we go', it ceases to be 'La Belle Dame'. The mood of a poem is associated very intimately with its rhythm and the tone colour of its words, and the best, indeed the only, way of summoning up the fitting mood for children, is to set free the rhythm and the word music in a reading aloud. It is to be believed that the mood may be induced in the child, even if he does not wholly grasp the content of the subject-matter. In reading poetry to children, the teacher may act almost literally on the advice given by a very charming humorist—'Take

care of the sounds' (which includes the movement of the words) 'and the sense will take care of itself'. It is worth while remembering that the emotional content of a poem may be matched and commented on in terms of music. Modern musicians often make use of a poetic extract to strike the mood note of their tone-poems. And if the musician feels that poetry is useful in setting the mood for his music, the teacher may be led to inquire if appropriate music may not be used to set a mood for his poetry readings. The scope of such experiments will obviously be limited by the musical attainments of the school staff. Happy is the school that can number an expert musician and a fine reader among its teachers. Where such experiment is possible, I would suggest some such procedure as the following. And first a counsel of perfection. Let the reader be accompanied in his reading by a sympathetic and extemporized accompaniment on the piano. This is the ideal treatment, but the number of musicians in the country capable of supplying an appropriate and impromptu accompaniment to poetry is probably well under three figures. Miss Rosina Filippi, with the aid of a very skilful accompanist, used to present 'By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept' in a most poignant manner, and some of my readers may remember that a Mr. Levey has been bold enough to attempt a musical accompaniment to *Sordello*, of all poems<sup>1</sup>. But if extemporization is not possible (it is always more desirable because it is unobtrusive and knits more closely to the poem than set music) it is possible to use set music. I would suggest that the music be given first and the poetry afterwards. This is a more convenient arrangement than a simultaneous accompaniment, because it does not incommode the reader in his rendering, because there is no danger of a divided attention on the part of the audience, and because it allows of the reader being his own accompanist. I give below a short parallel list which is intended to be purely suggestive. The teacher who is interested will naturally get more satisfaction by marrying the arts in his own manner.

<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough, Richard Steele conceived and commenced a similar enterprise under the name of the 'Censorium'. It was to combine recitations with music calculated to 'raise those passions which are suited to the Occasion'.

POEM	MUSIC
Come, live with me and be my love	Percy Grainger's Mock Morris
Spring goeth all in white.	German Shepherds' Dance from <i>Henry VIII</i>
Spring, the sweet Spring	Springtanz Op 47, No 6. Grieg
Burial of Sir John Moore }	Spring Song Mendelssohn
Burial of Wellington }	Funeral March from the Beethoven Sonata, Op 1
Death of a favourite cat	Enterrement de la poupée Tchaikowsky
Sohrab and Rustum.	Slow movement from Dvořák's 'New World' Symphony
The War Song of Dinas Vaur }	Heller's Sleepless Nights, No 4 in E Minor
Flodden Field. ( <i>Marmion</i> ) }	
Pack, clouds, away	
The lark now leaves his wat'ry nest }	Morgenstimmung Grieg.
Up the airy mountain	Elfentanz Grieg
The Lake Isle of Innisfree.	Debussy's Clair de Lune (Suite Bergamasque).
The Lotus-Eaters	Chopin. Nocturne, Op 32, No. 1
Cottager to her infant	Berceuse. Chopin.
When daffodils begin to peer.	Pastoral Dance from <i>Nell Gwynne</i> (German)
The Lady of Shalott.	Schubert Impromptu, Op 90, No 3
Morris's Summer Dawn.	Slow movement from Pathétique Sonata.
Playing on the Virginals.	Early English pieces of the period of Bull and Byrd
Keith of Ravelston.	Opening movement, Pathétique Sonata

It will be conceded that in this short list there is a deal of fine poetry and fine music ; and not the least valuable gain to the child which may follow from a combination of music and poetry is the enriched repertoire of the high things in both of the arts which a combined presentation may well bring about. When the pianola is as much a part of the school apparatus as the blackboard, technical difficulties will no longer stand in the way. Meanwhile, the help of a good gramophone is not to be despised.

In concluding this section, I would remind those who conceive it part of their work to read poetry to children, that there is nothing quite so infectious as emotion, except,

perhaps, the absence of emotion. He who would move others must first show that he is moved himself. If poetry reading in the schools be undertaken in the spirit of Mr. Silas Wegg, who reminded his patron that, 'When a person comes to grind off poetry, it is but right that he should expect to be paid for its weakening effect on the mind,' it will assuredly fail of its high purpose. Chaucer, foreseeing that his poem of *Troilus* might be indifferently read, thus addresses his book.

So praye I to God that non myswrite the,  
Ne the mys metre for defaute of tonge,  
And red wher so thow be, or elles songe  
That thow be understonde, God I beseeche !

Not to 'mys metre for defaute of tonge' is the least we can do for those who have laid humanity under a perpetual debt

It has been objected that (apart from inadequate speech) young teachers are not in a position to render the emotional content of poetry because their own emotional experience is meagre and circumscribed. It is true that a rich emotional experience is the prelude to that greatest of all professional qualifications, 'a wise and understanding heart'. It is true that the great emotions that have shaken humanity throb with unsubdued power on the page of the poet, yet often seem unable to disturb the equanimity of the schoolmaster. But imaginative sympathy will enable the thoughtful to live with a vicarious emotion ; and this is fortunate, for vicarious emotion is the only variety which the working teacher can afford. It may have been necessary for Byron to make a 'pageant of his bleeding heart' before he could write,

For the sword wears out its sheath,  
And the soul wears out the breast,  
And the heart must pause to breathe,  
And love itself have rest.

But imaginative sympathy will enable even the unsophisticated reader to feel the tragedy and the truth of that, though he may have to encompass his emotional adventures within the bounds laid down by respectability and £300 a year.

## SILENT READING

Two main considerations are to be borne in mind in connexion with silent reading. Silent reading is mainly a means to information. Hence when other things are aimed at—an appreciation of form, of word music, of rhythm—it must give precedence to reading aloud. Silent reading must aim at speed and accuracy, but opportunity for browsing should be provided. If the primary teacher draws his children from a modern Infants' Department, they will already have been practised in silent reading. This practice will be extended in the first year. Many opportunities will occur. Sentences containing messages and commands for individual children, 'Mary Jones, bring your writing-book to me,' and the like may be printed up on the blackboard, and each reading lesson should be prefaced by a short silent reading during which the children may obtain help from the teacher and from each other. Words which cause difficulty should be placed on the blackboard so that the class may commence the reading aloud with some sense of the drift of the passage. In addition to this preliminary private reading, the more fluent readers may form a silent reading group for extra practice. Promotion to this group should be held out as a reward for zeal; and it will be advisable to secure for their use (if the local authorities are gracious) an extra book or two in addition to the ordinary readers.

When the silent reading begins to take a definitely utilitarian turn as it will in the second year and beyond, it is important to remember that the field of inquiry must be limited: indeed, it is inadvisable at any stage to set a general subject for private study. Pertinent questions and definite headings given to the class before reading begins will help to secure that concentration and economy of effort which distinguishes the trained from the untrained reader. Discursive questions are to be avoided. 'Find out from your Bibles what you can about Nineveh, Babylon, and Jerusalem' (actually asked by an amateur schoolmaster) is likely to result in an aimless meandering on the part of the child.

It is in the upper division that we can do most to form the reading habit. We could wish our elder children to turn to reading for profit and delight; and to become,

in part, at least, the complete bookman—to buy, to annotate, to borrow, and to bring back. This is comprehensive, but the earnest teacher can scarcely be satisfied with less. He may remember books that were necessary at some time or other to his intellectual nourishment, but which he had to forgo for lack of a wise elder to bring book and reader into touch. He will realize, too, that there are books that lose their savour unless they are tasted in season; that the incident, for example, of Bill the Gardener in *Alice in Wonderland* who was kicked from the chimney pots into a neighbouring garden, is not to be relished to the full except at an age when gentlemen falling from top stories is a highly humorous affair. He will understand, too, that in the atmosphere surrounding real books, intellectual ardour (latent and probably unsuspected) may burst into sudden and generous flame. Not having the gift of prophecy, he will be unable to foresee the incidence of this intellectual possession, and quite possibly he may never hear of it; but this will only make him the more zealous to widen the circle of books for his pupils. He will leave no stone unturned to ensure his pupils realizing Thoreau's conception of reading as a 'noble exercise'.

There are one or two considerations in connexion with the silent preparation of the class subjects which need to be mentioned here. The preparation of history from the ordinary school history book is a very unsatisfactory business. The large generalizations and the inevitable compressions which go to the making of a short history of England, make the average history reader rather less interesting than an auctioneer's catalogue. Even the fortunate possessor of the historical sense must find it wellnigh impossible to get colour and flavour out of the desiccated history of many school readers. And the historical note-books popular in many schools (made so by the examiner's lust for facts and dates) are worse than the readers.

'On appealing to the country the majority gained by the Unionists was so great that Lord Salisbury again became Premier, backed by a powerful following.'

What can the child make of this sort of thing? It was laughed at by Lewis Carroll years ago, but the same sort of vague, woolly allusions (meaningless, except to ripe



readers) is still quite common. The successful history book for children catches some of the glamour which Scott puts on his page, that is to say, the history which best serves is literature, and the historical novel is often not only the most palatable, but the most nourishing food for children. Kingsley warns us that 'English literature is the best, perhaps the only teacher of English History', and the experience of those who really love history bears him out. All children will not read Scott. Good children will read his dialogue and incident. But most children can be got to read *The White Company*, *Micah Clarke*, *The Black Arrow*, *Prester John*, *The Splendid Spur*, and a dozen others. There is a very full list given in a book on the Teaching of History by Mr. C. H. Jarvis. And it is the business of the school to provide books of reference in which the child can pursue any particular interest which may be born out of his general work in the subject. *Mediaeval England*, with its numerous illustrations, is admirable for teachers but too detailed for children's use. A children's edition of this book would be a boon. In Utopia, a copy of the *Dictionary of National Biography* will be found in all schools. Kelly's *County Directories* are valuable books for reference. For those teachers who are at home, and can make their children feel at home with original documents, Keatinge and Fraser's collection is a useful one. Then there are the historians, to be read in patches. J. R. Green edited a selection which is published by Longmans, and there is a book on Arnold's list, *Readings in History and Biography*, containing rather simpler matter.

#### *Silent Reading in Geography*

There is much suitable material in this subject outside the ordinary geography readers, which are very often hopelessly dull. Perhaps the worst are the series, very familiar to teachers, in which a rather superior and quite unnatural boy plies a sort of super-parent with the most extraordinary questions. They should be avoided. The purpose of the geography reader is to lend eyes to the student; and a preference should be given to the records of first-hand impressions whenever it is possible to accommodate them to the current syllabus. The great geographers and explorers should on no account be overlooked.

Many pages of Franklin's *Journal*, Bates, Wallace, Darwin (*Voyage of the Beagle*), De Windt, Nansen, Burton, Foster Fraser, Edmund Candler, and Hesketh Prichard are full of interest for children. If the humanistic side of geography is stressed, there is much pertinent material in the lives of explorers. And of course the school library will contain Mandeville, Marco Polo, Hakluyt's *Voyages*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Bible in Spain*, Kinglake's *Eothen*, books which will give the child what the modern scientific methods seem so often to miss—romance. 'If my books will help me to it,' wrote Keats to his friend Reynolds, 'then will I take all Europe in turn and see the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them' Then there are memorable descriptions of natural phenomena and men and cities in the pages of the novelists. (Mr Burroughs in a little book *Gleanings in Geography*—Geo. Philipp & Son—gives a very full list with the localities dealt with) Newspapers often contain pertinent matter, reports of such societies as the Royal and the Geographical, steamship movements, articles from foreign correspondents on trade and social life abroad. Lastly, there are admirable hand-books published by the great colonies for the benefit of intending emigrants, and containing fresh and accurate information of life under other skies. They are usually to be had free from the local shipping office. With such a wealth of material, it is a pity that the child's reading should be limited to the hackwork which so often goes to the making of a school geography book.

### *Tests for Silent Reading*

The teacher who labours to accustom his children to free speech will find that he has spent his time well when it comes to testing for private reading. A trained child will reproduce the substance of a section or paragraph much more quickly than he will write it, and the perspective and proportion of a spoken reproduction do not suffer noticeably in comparison with a written one. For recreative reading in particular, speech is a much more suitable test than writing. If a child knows that he will be bound to put on to paper what he is about to read, it is conceivable that his appetite for the book may be blunted before he goes to it.

There are various ways of testing reading by speech. In the lower classes, simple questions on the subject-matter will outline a short connected account. If the class are engaged on the same book, the questioning may frequently be done by the children in turn. To frame questions is probably a more difficult task of assimilation than to answer them. The children who are to be called upon to question, should (in the early stages) be warned before they begin the reading. Higher up in the school, a connected reproduction will be required. If the reading matter is common to the class, the narrator should be prepared to answer his class-mates' questions on the matter of his reproduction; or he may question the class himself. When the book is intended to be 'read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested', a written test is advisable. It should be varied in form, and not too big in bulk. 'Write an account of the book you have read,' is a paralysing exercise for young children, and intended as an exercise in revision, it usually defeats its own object. Questions which demand some turning over of the subject matter in the mind, are better than questions aimed at a general reproduction.

#### READERS AND ANTHOLOGIES

There has been a decided improvement in the past decade, both in the quality and quantity of the reading matter in use in the schools. The old days when one book a year 'and that with deeffeculty' was accepted as a satisfactory standard, are gone, let us hope for ever: although there are still some Education Committees more than inclined to economize on the mental food of the children committed to their care. It is scarcely possible for children to read too much. The natural appetite of a healthy and intelligent child for books is voracious. It is the duty of the schools to provide for the appetite, to educate the palate, and to test the power of digestion. Elder children should read within the school year a series of at least six continuous readers, one of which (of satisfying length) should be somewhat above their heads, a book of prose extracts chosen for their value as literature, and a poetry anthology. The book of extracts may be made to serve very useful purposes and it should be selected

carefully. It will introduce a very welcome variety into the reading, and effect introductions to a number of new authors. That the introductions do not always, or even frequently, ripen into closer acquaintance, is not entirely the fault of the book. If the ground is skilfully prepared by the teacher, if the extracts are judiciously chosen, and if there is a reasonably good library of English literature available for the class, there is no reason why the child should not widen his reading circle in a very marked degree. There is the danger, and it must be guarded against, that the selected passages may pander to that taste for snippets which is such a disquieting feature of present-day readers and reading matter. If the book is used as a sort of literary *Tit-Bits*, it may conceivably do positive harm. But the teacher (where opportunities offer) should be at some pains to acquaint himself with the sources from which the extracts are taken, in order that he may present each extract with continuity and background. When the curiosity of the class is aroused, the extract should be followed by a consecutive reading if the source book can be procured. Selected passages provide very valuable material for appreciation and criticism. It is a great advantage in a book of this kind to have striking contrasts in style and matter in close juxtaposition. Some such arrangement is much to be preferred to a merely chronological sequence, which conveys little or nothing to the child. To be able to pass from such a piece of playful humour as Lamb's Essay on Roast Pig to the grim intensity of Christian's fight with Apollyon; to turn from the calculated intricacies of the close of De Quincey's Essay on Joan of Arc (a veritable labyrinth full of echoing sound) to the crisp staccatos of Macaulay's page; to contrast the vigour of Conrad's description of a storm in *Typhoon* or the same theme in *Copperfield*, with the placidity of the Yule-tide warts as pictured in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, is to add a genuine piquancy to the reading, and to create an atmosphere in which criticism may start into growth. When, as in some collections, prose and verse extracts of emotional and intellectual kinship are brought together, the scope for appreciation and criticism is widened. But the mere random insertion of verse extracts into an ostensible prose anthology (as of plums into a pudding) does not serve any purpose.

The practice of editing and abridging famous books for use in schools is a common and regrettable one. It is neither pedantry nor purism to insist on unmutilated texts being used in the Literature readings. It is no answer to say that children will not read Scott or Dickens but will read written versions of Scott or Dickens. Alas ! the essential Dickens or Scott inevitably disappears from the version. It is much better to use simpler matter which may still claim to be literature, rather than suffer the banalities of these guides to the classics. But intelligent children may be trusted to do their own editing. The teacher will endeavour to help them over the stony places, he may even indicate sections to be omitted, and occasionally in speech lessons a general discussion may centre round the book which will stimulate interest and throw light on dark places. But a really intelligent child will ferret his way through difficult reading matter with very little guidance, provided always that his interest is roused in the early chapters. If his hero is so unaccommodating as to stray into dull company (where, obeying a universal law, he will show as dull as his associates) the child hurries on anxiously to where Richard is himself again, and laying about him with his trusty weapon in delightful and well remembered fashion.

There is a passage in *David Copperfield* which in all probability gives us Dickens's early reading, and a comment which should interest those who question the propriety of unexpurgated editions for young people. 'My father had left a small collection of books in a little room upstairs to which I had access. From that blessed little room, *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, *Humphry Clinker*, *Tom Jones*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, and *Robinson Crusoe*, came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and did me no harm ; for whatever harm was in some of them was not there for me.' This is (one must admit) rather full-blooded stuff for a young reader, but undeniably Literature. It is scarcely necessary to insist that the continuous readers should be read at a fair speed, if they are to be enjoyed. To haggle over meanings of words converts what should be a recreation into drudgery.

Every effort should be made by the teacher to keep some

sort of supervision over the private reading of his children. Most public libraries have a children's section, and in some enlightened districts parcels of books are systematically sent out from the public library for use in the schools. Librarians and teachers should co-operate considerably more than they do at present, in furthering the private reading of children in their district. When school and library are brought into touch, possibly we may see children not only possessed of a library ticket, but beginning to use and value the books on the library shelves. It is a good plan to encourage children to keep a record of their private reading in their commonplace books. Some of the titles will undoubtedly distress the earnest teacher who is anxious that his children should read good literature ; but it is not to be expected that the young who have their reading synthesis still before them, should exercise a nice discrimination in the choice of books. If the teacher has a sense of humour, he may divert himself and do his class no harm, by publicly criticizing one of the blood and thunder paper-backs which the reading boy usually conceals about his person.

Anthologies of poetry and prose throughout the school are a prime necessity if any serious work in literature is to be attempted. The perfect anthology is the one constructed by the reader (it is always incomplete) out of his own reading. But it is a pity that publishers do not commonly provide wide margins or interleaved editions, and so make possible the addition of old and new favourites.

## CHAPTER V

### ON VERSE-MAKING

I am nae poet, in a sense ,  
But just a rhymers like by chance,  
And hae to learning no pretence,  
But what's the matter ?

I too will something make  
And joy in the making ,  
Altho' to-morrow it seem  
Like the empty words of a dream  
Remembered on waking.

MRS. BROWNING, speaking of the kind of verse which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the second-hand bookshop, was in irony moved to complain that 'Everybody who is anything at all is a poet in a parenthesis'. But this is no less than true for children. How often has it been observed that the child and the poet are near akin. If the child is father to the man he is both father and mother to the poet. For the word 'poetry' connotes not only the flowering of the poetic art in language, but a certain colouring of the mind common in children, not too common in mature people.

I sat myself down the world to admire,  
And saw the ripe blackberries on the green briar.

The man who wrote that was a poet by virtue of his admiration (admiration being one of the raw materials of poetry) quite apart from the poetic value or otherwise of his couplet. The working man who called the attention of his wife to that 'bloody' sunset was a poet escaped for a moment from his parenthesis, for he had first grasped the essence of that particular sunset, and then described it by its inevitable adjective. The child who wrote of a brook,

I never sleep, when night shades deep  
Spread in the still night hours ,  
When day is done, then I alone  
Lull the sweet woodland flowers.

Beside tall pines, bright celandines  
 Cluster in golden masses,  
 And by my bank, grows green and rank  
 Rushes, and woodland grasses.

was a poet, in so far as she had a measure of the creative instinct and spoke under a figure, a mode of utterance which poetry characteristically affects. There is a way of looking at things which is the way of poetry, and poet and child see eye to eye much more frequently than is commonly supposed. It is not nearly enough realized by teachers how similar in texture is the mind of poet and child. The poet lives in a world of emotion, and though the head may chasten the heart (as when he uses the file on his work) it does not dictate its outpouring.

Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,  
 'Fool,' said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart, and write'

The child's world too is emotional. In a very great degree he lives, in Wordsworth's phrase, 'by admiration, hope and love.' He reasons but little, and then only after a conscious effort. It is in the nature of both poet and child to follow their heart's desire. And both poet and child are imaginative beings. They are not so bound to those substantial unrealities money and business, but that they have occasion for dreaming. This is true, in spite of the fact that many poets when divested of their singing robes, have been singularly able men of business. Of poet and child it may be equally well said.

With a heart of furious fancies,  
 Whereof I am commander,  
 With a burning spear,  
 And a horse of air,  
 To the wilderness I wander.

With a Knight of ghosts and shadows  
 I summoned am to Tourney:  
 Ten leagues beyond  
 The wide world's end  
 Is the measure of my journey.

Moreover, the language of the poet is a language in its essentials understood by children. His words are simple, sensuous, passionate; so are theirs. He delights in pictures



and colour ; so do they. He finds a joy in the music of words and in the swell and subsidence of rhythm ; they do also. ' Poetry ', says an old Greek writer, ' is a sweet and insubstantial thing. ' To the child mind it may be as sweet and insubstantial as a daisy chain, and they may take as much delight in making the one as the other.

The creative instinct is as strong and abiding in the child as in the poet. They are both ' makers '. The poet labours to make a piece of beautiful work which will have its chances for all time ; and in his work finds the truest expression of himself, his highest human opportunity. The child strives after the expression of himself, and does it in the same way as the poet—by creative work. No material comes amiss to him, and he finds it as natural to make patterns out of words, as he does to make patterns out of toy bricks. There was a time, when the ability to write Latin verse was an accepted mark of a liberal education. There may come a time when the inability to write English verse may be regarded as evidence, if not of a mis-spent youth, at least of a narrow nurture.

But what will the practice of verse-making do for the child ? At the outset I would point out that one, and that the highest value of the exercise, is scarcely capable of being assessed by the ordinary school methods. We are dealing with the emotional, that is, the spiritual side of the child. We are anxious that he shall recognize beauty and attempt to record it in a beautiful fashion ; whether it be the beauty of visible things, or the beauty of images, or the beauty of man's thought and action. We would have him disturbed emotionally by a fine sunset, by stars mirrored in clear water, by the glow of autumn stubble : we desire that his imagination shall show him fields more beautiful than his own meadows, cities more romantic than his own abiding place : we hope that he will be quick to salute the noble qualities in man, eager to warm his heart at heroism, sacrifice, and high endeavour. This, and no less, is the highest aim of the verse-making lesson—that the child shall pay involuntary vows at the altar of beauty.

Obviously, such work will be difficult to measure, and it can hardly be examined by those who, like the Apostle, prefer to live by sight and not by faith. But the case for verse-making is not altogether on such insubstantial ground

as the sceptic may affect to discover in the above paragraph. It affords a real help towards gaining a sure and sensitive handling of language. The exigencies of rhyme and metre will teach the salutary lesson (and the more salutary because it is empirical knowledge) that the first word will not invariably answer. The child is compelled to reject and select, and in so doing becomes acquainted with that fundamental law of composition so strikingly expressed by Landor, 'I hate false words, and seek with care, difficulty and moroseness, those that fit the thing'. Further, apart from the mechanical selection induced by the mould of the form he is using, he may be helped to discover other reasons for not always preferring his first choice of expression. He may be led to reject a word because it clashes or jingles with a neighbour, he may be constrained to alter a phrase because it does not run well off the tongue, or because it impedes the flow of a previous line, he may refuse an adjective because in this or that particular connexion it has died from overwork. So he is made aware of euphony and rhythm. And the sifting necessitated by the Form is particularly wholesome because it dispenses with the teacher's mere *obiter dictum*, which is not without its danger for all concerned. The young versifier may often have cause to agree with Byron,

sometimes

Monarchs are less imperative than rhymes,

but he will be all the better for a useful mental discipline. The effect of verse-writing on his prose will be altogether to the good. It will stand to gain in colour and conciseness. A mind as earnestly practical as Dr. Franklin's observed this, and he recommended the making of verse as an early training, on the ground that it gave a genuine copiousness and command of language.<sup>1</sup> Our own Thomas Hardy holds to the same opinion.

Reference has already been made to the supreme importance of interest in the creative work of the child. Much of the writing in schools is artificial and barren just because the child never feels the work alive under his hands. Verse-writing is a valuable stimulus to composition. It is not at all uncommon to find children preferring to write in

<sup>1</sup> It is only fair to say that Hazlitt takes the opposite view.

verse rather than in prose, and it is not to be wondered at. Verse-making is an outlet for that natural delight in the music of words which even education has not been able to stifle. 'All deep things', says Carlyle, 'are Song. It seems somehow the very central essence of us, Song; as if all the rest of us were but mere wrappages and hulls.' I am always glad to remember how that very effective apostle of direct action, Alan Breck, was as proud of his song-making as he was of his bonny fighting. And why should not the child make for himself songs ('both words and music') after the manner of Alan? Possibly many children may prefer to make verse rather than prose, because verse appeals to the eye in a way that prose can never do. It is easy to believe that children find a sort of fascination in watching a set of verses grow under their hands; indeed, the sort of triumphant way in which they announce that they have completed another stanza, is sufficient proof of this. And children will actually make verse at home for their own delight. Can any one imagine a boy writing an essay on 'Coal Mining' or the 'Advantages of a Decimal System of Coinage' for pastime? Verse-making as an exercise obeys the great law of interest, and always, with the young, Profit and Interest are near neighbours.

It has been frequently pointed out that one way to acquire a style is by direct imitation of the lords of language. Stevenson's memorable phrase—that he played the 'sedulous ape' to great writers—is perhaps better known in the schools than acted upon. Imitation is a method of improvement commonly used in all the arts, and every well-considered scheme of verse-making will derive from the poets. Ruskin, it is true, decried imitation on the ground that it killed originality; but his own style, a child of the Bible, is a sufficient answer to this. It will be the business of the Appreciation lesson to draw attention to the special excellences of the Masters, and to make some inquiry into the methods by which they obtain their effects. It will be the business of the Verse-making lesson to attempt an imitation of these excellences, and the Criticism lesson will provide an opportunity to discover in what degree the imitation has been successful.

No genuine advance in culture can be hoped for, unless the work goes forward on the broad lines of Appreciation,

Criticism, Creative work ; and the way in which verse-making can serve as a measure of appreciation and an exercise in criticism, is not the least of the claims which it has upon the curriculum of English studies. I have referred to the possibility and importance of using the verse-making exercise in the service of beauty. The desire to make a beautiful thing is perhaps the most potent of all the influences that make for the culture of the individual. When man began to decorate his weapons with crude designs, he took a very marked step in the working out of the ape and tiger. And the devotion which nurtures the bright flame of beauty is badly needed in our education to-day. It is true that the eruption of human emotion occasioned by the war has unstopped many ears which otherwise were deaf to the appeal of art. It is also true, that since the war the utilitarians are shouting for utilitarianism more vehemently than ever, and the great danger fronting this generation is that they may be let loose in the schools. The practice of verse-making and the ideals of the Stock Exchange do not consort. 'All art is entirely useless', says Oscar Wilde ; and there are many people who, without in the least understanding the meaning of the phrase, would press it upon the notice of the schools. Verse-making is an art. If, in the class-room, it can catch but one breath of the divine air which nourishes its great mother, Poetry, if it can make but one imitative gesture after the beauty which the great Masters of song contrive for the solace of man, it will be justified of its works.

#### PRELIMINARY EXERCISES IN RHYME

The work in verse-making should go forward side by side with an examination into the art and artifices of poetry. Suggestive outlines for this purpose will be found in the chapter on Appreciation.

It is probably best to begin the exercises with rhymed couplets and to deal with rhyme before metre ; although if the work is read aloud—and this should always be done—children's ears will be quick to detect a wrong balance even before they can check their work by counting the stresses. Commence by a reading of some such *tour de force* of rhyme as 'How the water comes down at Lodore', or Poe's 'The

Bells', or Mahoney's 'Bells of Shandon', where the insistence of the rhymes catches the ear. The class may be asked to name some of the rhymes, notice their position, and attempt a definition. The teacher may then supply Milton's 'jingling sound of like endings', which is readily appreciated by children, and has the merit of being in itself an echo phrase of the nature of rhyme. The next step is to ask them to arrange a list of rhyming words either of their own making or from printed matter (the pronunciation list given in Chapter II will serve here). Next read some short couplets, such as .

March brings breezes loud and shrill,  
Stirs the dancing daffodil ,

or the linked couplet as in Keats :

The Sun with his great eye  
Sees not so much as I ,  
And the moon, all silver proud,  
Might as well be in a cloud ;

or Housman's 'March' :

The boys are up the woods with day  
To fetch the daffodils away ;  
And home at noonday from the hills  
They bring no dearth of daffodils.

Then ask for original couplets on these models. 'The days of the week' or 'Nursery Tales' or 'April' may serve as subject-matter, but always give a free choice in addition to suggesting subjects, as, for example :

Once in a deep green wood  
I saw Red Riding Hood. (D. B , 10 )

By the marshy river  
Where the tall trees quiver  
Grow Marsh Marigolds.

In all winds and weather  
With their heads together  
Blow Marsh Marigolds (I. S. T , 113.)

The first stages are taken naturally as an oral composition exercise. After the model has been shown, call for a first line, have it written up on the board, and ask for second lines to complete the couplet. Write down three or four of

the alternative lines, and help the class to select the best. The reasons for selection and rejection make most suitable material for fruitful criticism.

The rhymed couplet is a useful exercise, not only in the elementary stages of verse-making, but with advanced pupils. Rhyming letters are within the power of children of fourteen, and Pope, Cowper, and Barham provide examples which can be used as models. Occasionally the whole class may be called upon to contribute couplets. One way is to select the subject by a class vote, send a piece of foolscap round the class and require a couplet from each child. Recreative reading provides a suitable opportunity for this exercise. The result will be curiously uneven, but this is not altogether a bad thing, since it provides material for criticism when the completed work comes under the review of the class. After the defects have been noted in a criticism lesson, the verses may be revised by a single hand. This exercise in 'editing' is excellently contrived to sharpen the wits and call out the critical judgement.

The rhymed couplet lends itself to the treatment of the story in verse. An extract from Morris's *Life and Death of Jason* might be read and the class set to give a rhyming version of one of the world's greatest stories. If they have read *Tanglewood Tales* or Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses*, Malory, or Kingsley's *Heroes* they will not lack for material. They must be able to refer to the prose rendering (to supply the incident), and the teacher can, if he choose, divide up the story between the class. The individual contributions may be dove-tailed together in a class discussion and the exercise spread over more than one session. There is something attractive to the young in mere bulk (Ruskin at the age of eight turned Scott's *Monastery* into four hundred lines of verse), and it is not uncommon to find children reaching a higher level in long than in short forms. Milton lamented that the *Squire's Tale* was never finished.

Call up him that left half told  
The story of Cambuscan bold,  
Of Cambal and of Algarsife,  
And who had Canace to wife.

If Cowden Clarke's admirable *Tales from Chaucer* is in the School Library, here is an exercise ready to hand. Spenser,

in Book IV of the *Faerie Queene*, endeavoured to fulfil the uncompleted task. The conclusion of his beautiful apostrophe to Chaucer might fittingly serve as a title.

I follow here the footing of thy feet,  
That with thy meaning so I may the rather meet

A useful variation to couplet-making and a delightful exercise for ingenuity is to supply or to ask for end rhymes and fit lines to them, or a couplet may be read shorn of its rhymes, and the class be called upon to supply them. Or the teacher may require his class to work on the method of Boileau, who considered that if the second rhyme of his couplet was decided on before the first it prevented the rhyme taking liberties with the sense. It may be remembered that Dryden, in his defence of rhymed plays, praises this method of constructing the couplet.

The question of rhyme disturbing the sense does not present grave difficulties. It is not uncommon to find children meriting Butler's censure: 'When he writes he commonly steers the sense of his lines by the rhyme that is at the end of them, as butchers do calves by the tail.' Any particularly flagrant example may usefully serve the teacher as text for a critical discourse designed to show the importance of unity in execution as well as in plan. Neither is there any danger of the rhymed couplet in the hands of the children becoming a mere 'mechanic art'.

More often will the teacher have to complain of short measure. He will need to exercise a careful supervision over subjects (the couplet, for instance, is not perhaps the ideal vehicle for expressing emotion), and he may find oral verse-making a helpful stimulus and an encouragement to the weaker members of the class. In the later exercises I shall return to what Campion called the 'childish titillation of rhyme' without perhaps realizing that the phrase had a value other than the disparaging one which he intended it to convey.

#### PRELIMINARY EXERCISES IN RHYTHM

An acute sense of rhythm appears to be one of the gifts of the gods. It is this above everything else which marks out the supreme work, whether in prose or poetry. The ability to create rhythm does not appear to come by taking pains, but something may and must be done in composition

teaching to develop the rhythmic sense. It was Lessing who first pointed out (using Homer's description of the shield of Achilles as an illustration) that poetry had an enormous advantage over the static arts of painting and sculpture inasmuch as it was not limited to a point, but could move freely through a sequence of time. But in addition to the sequence of the subject carried on by the meaning of the words, there is a much more fundamental movement set up by the rhythmic contours of the poet's language, a movement which, in all good poetry, is akin to, and suggests the subject-matter. 'Rhythm', says Atterbury in his preface to Waller's poems, 'is that dance of words which good ears are pleased with.' How shall we make our children aware of the dance of words, for they must feel it before they attempt to create it? Something has already been said of this in the chapter on reading; it can only be repeated here. The teacher must constantly read aloud to his class, vigorously outlining the rhythms. Passages for reading have been given on p. 64, and to these may be added the list of converts in Acts II. 9-12, Stevenson's 'Requiem', Tennyson's 'City Child' and 'Charge of the Light Brigade', and the magnificent onrush of the first chorus in 'Atalanta in Calydon'. Further, he must importune for rhythmical reading and recitation from his class. It will be found that some children are already in a state of natural grace, the salvation of others is to be worked for. I remember hearing of one poor boy who was accustomed to repeat Latin gender exceptions with a strong rhythmical body movement, rising and falling on the toes with a quite maddening persistence. When the perturbed teacher, who probably thought that the contortions were the prelude to some rare form of insanity, suppressed the movement, it was found that the boy could not repeat the mnemonic lines at all. It was the old professional attempt to expel nature with a pitchfork, and it was bound to fail. But it is time to consider the actual business of teaching the technique of verse.

Begin by directing attention to the differences between the letter of prose and verse. To this end one passage of prose and another of verse may be exhibited on the blackboard, and it will assist the eye to place them in parallel versions. (Two blackboards may be used.) Further, the contrast will be more striking if the two passages are akin in subject.



'Yea, and slew mighty kings; for his mercy endureth for ever    Sehon king of the Amorites, for his mercy endureth for ever. And Og the king of Basan; for his mercy endureth for ever.'

In bloody battail he brought down  
Kings of prowess and renown  
For his mercies still endure,  
Ever faithful, ever sure

He foiled bold Sehon and his host  
That ruled the Amorrean coast  
For his mercies still endure,  
Ever faithful, ever sure.

And large-limb'd Og he did subdue,  
With all his over-hardy crew  
For his mercies still endure,  
Ever faithful, ever sure

Now ask for the obvious differences both to ear and eye in the two passages. There are rhymes in the verse and not in the prose. Each line of verse commences with a capital letter. The verse lines break off before the available space is filled. This is the important difference for our purpose, and if it is not suggested by the class, the teacher must make the point and further give the information that this characteristic turn gives its name to this particular way of arranging words (Lat *versus*, a turning). Prose (Lat. *prosus*, straight on or straight forward) is that kind of composition in which the author writes straight on until the space in the line is filled. Here it may be well to refer the class to their anthologies in order to observe that lines vary in length before the turn is made. Next ask why the poet finds it necessary to turn from one line to another. It will almost certainly be suggested that the turn displays his rhyme to greater advantage. If the teacher will write the verse straight on in prose fashion, and have the result read aloud, the truth of this will be evident to the dullest ear. But this reason does not account for blank verse (of which a specimen must be shown) being turned in precisely the same manner as rhymed verse. Possibly the bright boy in the class will suggest that the lines are broken off in order to 'keep them the same length'—that is, for the sake of balance.

This needs developing. How does the poet know that his lines are properly balanced? How does he know when the turn is due? His ear informs him. But how would people with untrained ears balance their lines? By measuring them one against the other. In what way? By counting the syllables (This is a useful half-truth). The balance or measure of a line is called its metre. Balancing the lines of a poem is called scansion.

This is quite enough theory for the present. Before treating of a method of scansion, experiment with the ears of the class by asking them for a quatrain of linked couplets. This is the heroic method favoured by old D'Israeli, who pours as much scorn on the mechanical counting of stresses as he does on the use of a rhyming dictionary. The attempts must be read aloud, and it is a good plan to divide the class into pairs, each boy to read out his companion's effort. This allows of the author being all ears, and avoids the numbing effect of that shyness which Mrs. Browning assures us is the normal frame of mind of poets when reading their own verses. Some of the class will achieve a fairly correct balance. Others will be able to regularize their rhythm after hearing it read aloud. The rest may be passed over just now.

Now comes the question of how to teach the mechanical way of balancing lines by organizing the syllables into feet. Begin by isolating the syllables in a stanza of verse and numbering them on the blackboard. Let the class keep a tally on their figures.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The	friend	ly	cow	all	red	and	white.

Then pair off the syllables into feet, sounding the accented syllable with an exaggerated stress and instructing the class to put down a finger for the stressed syllables only. Enter the result between bars on the blackboard.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The	friend/ly	cow/all	red/and	white/.			
1		2		3		4	

The term bars is a useful one just here, since the children are familiar with it in music, where it performs the same

function as it does in the above line<sup>1</sup>. Then begin a third reading, and ask the class to notice especially the stressed syllables. Give the information that the syllables dwelt on by the voice are said to be stressed or accented. Mark the stresses on the board

The frĕnd ly cōw all rēd and whĭte.

Point out that the horizontal stress mark measures the line more effectively than bars, since it shows the incidence of the stresses. Finally, tell the class that the sign for the accented syllable is —, for the unaccented ∪. English poetry is measured by the number of accented syllables. Lastly, one line might be written on the board fully scanned, and copied out by the class:

The frĕndly cōw all rēd and whĭte.

Written algebraically 4 ∪ —.

#### EXERCISES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANZA FORM

We are now in better case to deal with the development of stanza form, a matter of some importance if the child's verse exercises are to advance beyond the simplest measures. To take a boy from the rude simplicity of the Ballad stanza to the elaborations of Swinburne or Dr. Bridges is a valuable object-lesson in literary evolution. This is not to suggest that children will ever handle a long and subtle stanza-form with facility, but they ought to be made familiar with the possibilities of music which an elaborate rhyme-scheme displays. Moreover, the longer forms are useful for good children to break their teeth on. A boy who has ears tuned by a good reading aloud to the melody of the Spenserian stanza or Galahad, may be encouraged to try the instrument for himself. What if he fails? To fail in such an attempt is in truth a success. And the ampler space of an elaborated stanza with its unalterable sequence of rhymes may prove of real help to the imagination, a truth which Butler forgot in the diatribe previously quoted.

'The rhyme, and nothing but the rhyme, will whisper things unexpected and charming, things he would never have thought of but for her, things with strange and remote relations to each

<sup>1</sup> It may be observed by the teacher that the peculiar construction of the throat automatically ensures a strong and weak beat. It needs a conscious effort to pronounce Hō ly with two stresses.

other, all united in the disorder of a dream. Nothing, indeed, is richer in suggestion than the strict laws of these difficult pieces; they force the fancy to wander afield, hunting high and low; and while she seeks through the world the foot that can wear Cinderella's slipper, she makes delightful discoveries by the way.'

Those who practise verse will recognize the truth of this.

It will be necessary at the outset to deal with the question of varying line lengths as found in stanza-forms before much progress can be made. Children, unless they are instructed, will vary the length of their line out of sheer caprice, and the teacher must be on his guard lest the verse-making break down into irregularities, and so defeat one of its fundamental justifications—the development of a sense of form. A child handed in to me the following:

White on the grassy ground  
The daisies' eyes are closing  
Sweet seems the earth around,  
While the cuckoo's song so clear  
Rings on the cooling air.  
And all the welkin fair  
Echoes her song

It will be observed that there is a distinct tendency to depart from a definite form both in the rhymes and the line balance. Remembering Chaucer's appeal to Apollo to make his poem 'The House of Fame'

somewhat agreeable

Though some verse fail in a syllable,

and feeling that this was sufficiently 'agreeable' to warrant editing, I revised it after this fashion:

White on the grassy ground,  
The daisies' eyes are closing.  
Cuckoo is homeward bound,  
Soon earth will be reposing.  
Golden the evening star,  
Smiles on the shining flowers.  
The gates of sleep unbar,  
And dreams fall soft as showers.

The girl agreed that this return to form justified itself and her verse in future betrayed no tendency to get out of shape. But the teacher should aim at preventing such irregularities, and the best way of doing this is to examine stanza-forms with the object of determining:

(1) That variation of line length in a stanza does not

mean that there is an absence of pattern, and that lines can be varied in an irresponsible manner, rather does it throw the pattern into bolder relief.

(2) Lines are varied in length from a desire to avoid the monotony which a uniform line may incur, and because such variation may reinforce the appeal of the subject-matter.

(3) If lines are irregular and no two stanzas agree, the verse form breaks down into prose.

Begin by examining a simple stanza such as John Gilpin:

- 4 John Gilpin wās a Citizēn
- 3 Of crēdit aȳd renōwn,
- 4 A trān-band Cāptain ēke was hē
- 3 Of fāmous Lōndon Tōwn

Have the stresses tapped out as the stanza is read aloud, numbered, and placed at the beginning of each line. Next show that the pattern is uniform, by scanning three or four stanzas selected by the class. Contrast this regular 4 3 4 3 with a stanza (edited for the occasion):

- 5 John Gilpin wās a wōrthy Citizēn
- 2 Of grēat renōwn,
- 6 A vāliant trān-band Cāptain ī those dāys was hē
- 4 Well knōwn ī fāmous Lōndon Tōwn

Refer back to the reasons which led the poet to turn his lines to preserve the balance. Show in the original how 1 balances 3, and 2, 4. But if lines may be any length, there is no balance to preserve. Write the amended stanza straight on in prose fashion:

‘John Gilpin was a worthy Citizen of great renown. A valiant trainband Captain in those days was he, well known in famous London Town’

The class will agree that this looks and sounds but ‘prose tagged with rhymes’. It may be worth while to add yet another version with the rhymes cancelled:

- John Gilpin was a Citizen
- Of credit and good name,
- A train-band Captain eke was he
- Of famous London Town.

and to ask which seems to destroy the stanza most effectually—cancelling the lines, or altering the metrical structure. Have the conclusion of the matter written upon the board. If lines are irregular in length the verse-form disappears, and a prose form takes its place. Now deal with the

varying lengths of line according to pattern, as opposed to irregular variation. First point out that poems may be written with a uniform length of line throughout. Have the class refer to 'The Daffodils' (it will probably be in their anthologies). Scan it and number the stresses. Postulate the possibility of a long poem being written in lines of uniform length and take the opinion of the class as to what the result may well be—monotony. Show by referring to the anthology how Scott in *Marmion*, for instance, varied his line lengths to avoid this danger. If it be objected (it is to be hoped it will be) that long poems are written in pentameters, point out that the varying position of the caesura does, in the hands of a great poet, save blank verse from monotony. But variation of length has a positive as well as a negative value. Show on the board a stanza of Emily Lawless's 'Dirge for all Ireland'.

5 Drop, forest, drop your sad accusing tears,  
 5 Send your soft rills adown the silent glade,  
 5 Where yet the pensive yew its branches rears,  
 5 Where yet no axe affronts the decent shades  
 3 Pronounce her bitter woe,  
 3 Denounce her furious foe,  
 3 Her piteous story show  
 2 That all may know,  
 2 Then quickly call  
 5 Your young leaves Bid them from their stations fall  
 4 Fall! fall! fall! fall!  
 5 Till of their green they weave her funeral pall

Here the long pentameter echoes the mournful heaviness of the poet's imagining. The movement quickens into indignation in the four short trimeters, culminates in the two short lines, and dies away again in the pentameters. Particularly notice the unmated line,

Fall! fall! fall! fall!

which is to be read very slowly and as a four-foot line, each syllable (so broad is the stress) having the time-value of a dissyllable. There is a similar effect in Cowper's line, 'Tóll f6r the bráve', which has three stresses for four words. If the illustration and the comments are in the least degree successful, the class will realize in some measure that the varying of line lengths is not capricious. The sure and

fitting handling and matching of line lengths is an authentic mark of poetic power and vision, and, like the rest of the artifices, may be used in barren and artificial fashion by those whose technique outruns their inspiration. It is true that mere craftsmanship will build up striking and effective patterns, but the happiest effects (as in Dr. Bridges' 'Elegy on a Young Lady') are above mere craftsmanship.

It is to be hoped that the class will now realize that stanzas imitated from the poets ought to show fidelity of rhythm as well as of rhyme-plan. The following is not a faithful imitation, although it is a pretty enough stanza:

*Model:*

When cats run home and light is come,  
And dew is cold upon the ground,  
And the far-off stream is dumb,  
And the whurring sail goes round,  
And the whurring sail goes round,  
Alone and warming his five wits  
The white owl in the belfry sits

*Imitative Stanza:*

Even is come and darkness lours, (originally 'lowers')  
And the sun in the west is set  
Dew is falling on the flowers,  
Grass upon the hill is wet,  
Grass upon the hill is wet  
The owl upon the oak doth sit,  
To whit, to whoo, to whoo, to whit. (K J, 12)

Children will often ask, when they are not imitating set stanzas, if they may use such and such patterns for their stanza. The only possible answer is, 'Try it and you will find out, by reading the work aloud.' But, at the risk of being wearisome, I would again urge upon the teacher the necessity of having the number of stresses entered before each line, as below.

THE THAMES

4— I flow o'er pebbles round and bright,  
3— I go past busy farms,  
4— I travel on by day and night,  
3— I hear the night alarms  
4— The boats upon me slowly sail,  
3— They sail o'er weed and rush;  
4— At night I hear the nightingale,  
3— At morn I hear the thrush. (J. C, 12.)

The disturbance of accent, to which the beginner is prone, will be discussed in the section treating of Irregularities in children's Verse.

Some few matters in connexion with the nature of rhyme will need to be dealt with. Eye rhymes (slough, rough) and assonances (rhyme in which only the vowel sounds agree) (feel, need) should be discussed and examples given. The class might well be asked to look up imperfect rhymes in their anthologies. There is a good crop in Mrs Browning's work. The strict rule for rhyming is 'that no syllable once used as a rhyme can be used again for that purpose throughout the poem, not even if it be spelt differently while keeping the same sound; nor if the whole word is altered by a prefix, the syllable that rhymes must always be a new one both in sense and sound'. It is somewhat of an ideal, even for the purist.

So far the exercises have been limited to the rhymed couplet and its combination into quatrains. It may now be shown how two rhymes will sustain a melody through a four-lined stanza. Read the song from *Maud*, have it copied on the board, with the distinguishing letter entered at the ends of the lines:

I know the way she went	a
Home with her maiden posy,	b
For her feet have touch'd the meadows	c
And left the daisies rosy.	b

It may be suggested that the feminine rhymes have a greater sonority and carrying power than male or single rhymes, and are of peculiar value in sustaining the melody.

This stanza is freely used in the ballads:

A lytle boy among them asked	a
What meant that gallows tre,	b
They sayde to hange a good yeoman	c
Called Wylyyam of Cloudeslie.	b

And in Housman's 'Recruit' where the rhyming words are not feminine:

And you will list the bugle	a
That blows in lands of morn,	b
And make the foes of England	c
Be sorry you were born.	b

As exercises the class might be asked to add extra



stanzas to the Tennyson poem or to continue the story of 'Wylliam of Cloudeshe'; and it so happens that the ballad writer has provided us with an introductory stanza which might serve as a title heading:

To Caerleil wente these bold yeomen,  
All in a morning of maye,  
Here is a Fyt of Cloudeshe  
And another is for to saye.

Or they might be asked to write of the 'Recruit's Home Coming', after Housman, or if they are a venturesome company, to plunge boldly into an original ballad, of which an example is given at the end of Chapter V.

### *Variations of the Quatrain*

By a judicious choice of passages for reading, aided by artful questioning, the class may be led to see that an obvious method of 'tuning up' the quatrain rhymed *a, b, c, b*, is to make it carry more rhymes. It is an interesting experiment to limit the preliminary reading of fully-rhymed quatrains to one variety (say the familiar *a, b, a, b*) and ask for new rhyme combinations (excluding the two couplet quatrain). The combination will not, of course, be new to the teacher, but the boy who consciously arranges his rhymes *a, b, b, a* will deserve some of the credit due to a discoverer. Additional stanzas to Tennyson's 'Brook', Herrick's 'To Meadows', or Dr. Bridges' 'Windmill' may be asked for as exercises, or the class may choose their own subjects.

### IRREGULARITIES IN CHILDREN'S VERSE

It will be convenient here (before the more elaborate forms are approached) to say something of the irregularities of metre already spoken of which frequently disfigure the verse exercises. Gross irregularity of metre may be committed within the limit of a single stanza, and it is not unusual to find the pattern of the second stanza varying from the first and the third from either. The remedy is to insist on the pattern being written down along with the rhyme plan as previously recommended, before the stanza

is begun. Or if it is thought preferable to give the child a free hand with the first stanza (and it may be argued that the pattern does not grow clear until it is actually complete in the first stanza) then the child must set down the pattern which he has evolved before he writes succeeding stanzas. Reading aloud will almost always discover such gross irregularities as missing or extra feet, and if the rough copy shows the marking of the stresses, eye as well as ear will convince the child of error.

A much more difficult irregularity to deal with is the inversion of metrical accent, as where trochee is written for iambus. Poets may invert the metrical accent with very happy effect, but the poet's irregularities are either the work of a master craftsman cunningly contriving subtleties of rhythm, or apparently write themselves when a poet, as distinct from a versifier, holds the pen. The child, however, sins through ignorance, and his irregularities are invariably to be regretted. How are they best dealt with? We must have the work read aloud, and the voice must mark out the stressed words or syllables in order to discover when the substitution occurs. A gross mistake in the metrical accent may dislocate the natural accent as if *agrée* (iambic) were stressed *āgrée* (trochaic). The child will admit that this is not possible and he may be then set to amend his line. Further, the teacher may require (as a preventive measure) the sign for an unstressed syllable *˘* to be used in addition to the usual stress mark and insist on the child revising his pattern before handing in the exercise. Substitution of one accent for another, unless it is very deftly done, causes a ruggedness which is easily apparent when the line is read aloud. The child should be helped to realize that to interrupt the even flow of a line without very good cause, is a blemish. The awkward break will help him to locate his error, but if he fails to discover it himself, it should be pointed out.

Then there are certain regularities which are as much to be deplored as the irregularities spoken of above. A child may fail to accommodate his rhythm to the natural accent of speech and throw into relief unimportant and unmusical words, such as particles and conjunctions, while maintaining the mechanical beat with exactitude.

- ∪ Sleep and rest, my pretty dear,  
 ∪ For the night is drawing near;  
 ∪ And to rest is gone the sun,  
 ∪ Now at last his work is done.

This offends because the strong beat throws 'for', 'and' into too great prominence at the beginning of the second and third line. The verse accent must not do violence to the speech accent. Breaches of this rule may be commented on by the teacher during the criticism of verses. It is as well to remember that male rhymes always carry a metrical accent. But it is not possible to command poetic rhythm either by keeping or breaking rules. The gods bestow it on their favourites. In considering this matter of irregularities the teacher will take care not to come within the censure of Pope:

But most by numbers judge a poet's song,  
And smooth or rough with them is right or wrong.

Much poetry has been written without any knowledge of metre. A striking example is Jane Elliot's 'Lament of Flodden', written in a difficult dactylic metre, and there is strong presumption for believing that this is the only poem she ever wrote. Metricians are constantly differing over questions of scansion and their technicalities are of little use either to teacher or child. Gross violations are easily discovered, and they will be less frequently committed as the child's ear becomes accustomed to the flow of his own verse.

#### EXERCISES BASED ON CERTAIN EXCELLENCES TO BE FOUND IN POETRY

Readers of the *Rudiments of Criticism* will remember Mr. Lamborn's wise and loving analysis of the charm of poetry. Chief among the poet's excellences are his use of colour, his faculty of picture-making, echo-writing both of sound and movement and bound up with this the making of word music, and his suggestion of mood and atmosphere. The exercises which follow are designed to give some practice in these excellences and they presuppose

that the class has made acquaintance with them during appreciation lessons

*Colour in Poetry*

Read the following passages and ask the class to open their eyes to the colour displayed on the poet's page:

*A study in grey,*

I heard them talking and praising the grey French country,  
Dotted with red roofs high and steep,  
With just one grey church tower keeping sentry  
Over the quiet dead asleep  
Grey sea, grey sky, as grey as duty,  
Grey sands where grey gulls flew,  
And I said in my passionate heart, they know not beauty,  
Beloved, who know not you

*And in gold,*

Gold on her head, and gold on her feet,  
And gold where the hems of her kirtle meet,  
And a golden girdle round my sweet,  
Ah! qu'elle est belle la Marguerite.

*And in white,*

Spring goeth all in white,  
Crowned with milk-white May;  
In fleecy flocks of light  
O'er heaven the white clouds stray:  
White butterflies in the air,  
White daisies prank the ground;  
The cherry and hoary pear  
Scatter their snow around

*And Symphonies in colour.*

Madeline's bedroom in *The Eve of St Agnes*, the consecutive stanzas beginning:

'A casement high and triple-arch'd there was',  
'Full on this casement shone the wintry moon';

Browning's 'Thus the Mayne glideth'; Tennyson's 'Lady of Shalott', and Mr. Masfield's 'Cargoes'. It may be observed that the colouring in the last poem is allusive rather than direct. It has been said of some of Landor's shorter poems that they are cameos addressed to the eye as well as to the ear. Instruct the class to 'address the eye' in the following exercises:

The woods in October.  
 A snowfall.  
 A hedgerow in June or a copse in April.  
 A harvest field.  
 Fairies dancing in the moonlight.

After these exercises the following poems may be read : Dr. Bridges' 'North Wind in October' and 'London Snow'; Shelley's 'A Dream'; Hood's 'Ruth'; 'The Fairies of Cauldon Lowe'; and Allingham's 'Up the Airy Mountain'. Such a reading will do something to show the child how far he has succeeded (or failed).

### *Picture-making Exercises*

Poetry is full of mental pictures, sometimes graven with a few determined strokes, as Coleridge's picture of a tropical sunset :

The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,  
 At one stride comes the dark.

sometimes elaborated with a meticulous brush as in the crowding smiles of 'The Goblin Market'. Read the picture of the ship in *Paracelsus* beginning :

Over the sea our galleys went,  
 With cleaving prows in order brave.

Aetes' palace in *The Life and Death of Jason* (line 434), the picture of the snake in Keats's *Lamia* beginning 'She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue', Arnold's vignette of the sleeping children in *Tristram and Iseult*, and James Stephens's pen picture of an old Irish peasant *Danny Murphy*. It is advisable to acquaint the class with the special object of the reading and they should understand that they will be called upon to attempt pictures of their own after the reading is ended. Allow a perfectly free hand as to metre and rhyme plan, and ask for two stanzas at least on—

A dragon.  
 Cinderella's kitchen or Aladdin's cave.  
 A gypsy caravan or an old woman on the roads.  
 A Christmas tree.  
 The baby.

Have the results read aloud, and give or withhold credit

as the picture is clear or blurred in outline, and as essentials do or do not receive adequate treatment. Point out that the use of colour is specially grateful in the picture exercise, although one of the most delightful vignettes in our literature, Collins's 'Ode to Evening', is a pure monochrome. After the exercise read as a corrective 'The secret church' in Galahad; 'I wish I lived in a caravan' (Rands); 'In Fisherrow' (Henley); 'An old woman of the roads' (Padraic Colum).

An interesting experiment is to take a picture, ask for a rhymed description, and compare the result with the exercise based on imagination only. It will invariably be found that the imaginative exercise produces a better piece of pictorial writing. The picture exercise very often fails because of its very literalness.

### *The achievement of atmosphere*

By the witchery of certain words in certain combinations poetry suggests atmosphere and mood. The atmosphere may be quite alien to everyday experience, indeed it often stands away from any conceivable human experience. It may be 'The light that never was on sea or land', but we believe and share in it because it appeals to our imaginative sympathy. All good poetry has this power of suggesting atmosphere. It is one of the authentic marks of poetry. How it is done is one of the secrets which the Muse whispers to her favourites; but we may notice that some few words, often only one, appear to saturate the immediate context. Thus in Shakespeare's line

Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,

which has been said to suggest the actual fragrance of the summer countryside, the one word 'burned' irradiates the whole line. And it is worth noticing that the summoning words almost always refer to sense impressions and are particular and not generic in class. Out of the whole range of atmosphere and mood which is spanned by the gamut of poetry, I have selected as the subject of exercises the outpouring of the loving human heart, and the purely physical atmosphere belonging to the delineation of nature and the seasons.

*The reproduction of atmosphere*

Read the first two stanzas of Keats's *St Agnes' Eve*, the first stanza of Tennyson's poem of the same name, and Shakespeare's song, 'When icicles hang by the wall'. Then as a contrast in temperature read the two consecutive stanzas in *Thyrsis* beginning 'So some tempestuous morn in early June' and the *Ancient Mariner* from 'All in a hot and copper sky' to the end of part two. Call attention to the very definite concrete writing. Instead of saying 'When it was winter' the poet says 'When icicles hang by the wall'. Ask for verses on—

A spring morning.

Twilight in the fields.

Noon in the hayfield.

The first snowfall

The completion of a stanza beginning—

'When cats run home and light is come.'

Lying in bed on windy nights.

After the exercises read Nash's 'Spring, the sweet Spring' or Shakespeare's 'When daisies pied'; Longfellow's 'First Snowfall' or Thomson's stanzas on 'The Snowstorm'; Tennyson's stanza, of which the first line has been set; Stevenson's 'Windy Nights'; and William Howitt's 'The wind in a frolic'.

*And of mood*

Read 'The Cottager to her infant'; Scott's 'O hush thee, my baby'; David's lament over Jonathan (2 Samuel i 19), Coventry Patmore's 'The Toys', Byron's 'Dying Gladiator'; Mr. Binyon's 'To the Fallen'; Burns's 'To Mary in Heaven'. Ask for verses on—

A cradle song.

To the fallen in battle.

A rhyming epitaph on a dead soldier.

On the death of Mary Queen of Scots (written by boys from the point of view of a soldier present at the execution; by girls as a maid of honour).

On an infant dying young.

After the exercises read Tennyson's 'Sweet and Low'; Stevenson's 'Requiem'; Marvell's 'Execution of Charles I' (stanzas 13-16); Herrick's 'Upon a child that dyed' or

Dr. Bridges' 'On a dead child'; Whitman's 'Captain, my Captain'.

#### THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF STANZA FORM

So far the forms dealt with have been limited to the rhymed couplet and the several variations of the quatrain. It is both possible and desirable to extend the child's technique. Many of the exercises suggested in the last section would show cramped and corrugated within a four-line limit; and what is altogether more important, the essaying of the longer forms will weed out those who are incapable of sustaining an extended flight and open up new possibilities for the more able versifiers.

The five-lined stanza and the sextain make a natural development from the quatrain. Show two or three five-lined patterns on the blackboard, if possible in parallel columns.

Othere, the old sea captain, <i>a</i>	4—'Tis Spring! come out to
Who dwelt in Helgoland, <i>b</i>	ramble <i>a</i>
To Alfred lover of truth, <i>c</i>	3—The woods and fields around, <i>b</i>
Brought a snowy walrus tooth, <i>c</i>	4—For under hedge and bramble <i>a</i>
Which he held in his brown right	3—And on the hollow ground <i>b</i>
hand <i>b</i>	3—The primroses are found <i>b</i>

LONGFELLOW.

HOUSMAN.

The class may be helped to see that there are more possibilities of melody in Housman's stanza than in Longfellow's. They may be asked for the reasons (the first stanza begins with a blank line, and the second stanza carries two feminine rhymes as against the male rhymes in the first). It may be suggested that a method of mating the blank line in Longfellow's stanza is to make it chime with the first line of the succeeding stanza, as in an early poem of Dr. Bridges, a device reminiscent of chain verse. These two forms, of course, do not exhaust the pattern range of the five-lined stanza. Other varieties may be shown at the teachers' discretion or the class may be set to discover them without any previous preparation.

A similar method may be pursued with the sextain. Point out that the simplest variety of the pattern consists of three-rhymed couplets *aa bb cc*. But a mechanical subdivision of couplets into six-line sections is not sufficient of itself to make a genuine stanza, as experiment will show. There is a unity of thought in the stanza which makes it



akin to the paragraph in prose, although of course its technical significance lies in its being the shortest number of lines in which the pattern is completed. An easy writing approach to the sextain has the rhymes *ab ab cc*, which is simply a quatrain followed by a couplet. This combining of two patterns to form a third is a characteristic mode of stanza-growth, and there are analogies in the sister arts of painting and music. A useful illustration (although it is not quite on all fours) is the blending of blue and yellow to make green. It is most important that the interdependence of stanza forms should be commented on and that the exercises should follow a sequence designed to show this interdependence. When the child sees his new form spring from the old, as the compound from the simple leaf, he is able to realize the beautiful and ordered development of poetic patterns. If stanza forms are shown on the blackboard, the development may very readily be followed. A list of stanza forms should be drawn up by the children from material in the anthology; and the teacher might arrange the common forms chart fashion, using coloured chalk to lay bare to the eye the foundations which carry the weightier structures. Along with the sextain the eight-lined *Don Juan* stanza (an obvious extension) 5  $\cup$  - *ab, ab, ab, cc* may be introduced to the class.

The name of Chaucer is intimately associated with what has been called the Chaucerian Heptastich (*a b a b b c c*) and a good deal of his work is cast in this mould. Its somewhat loose and rambling structure is well suited to narrative verse. It is an interesting exercise to ask for narratives in this form, and compare the result with those written in rhyming couplets (see p. 86). If the same subject is handled, some considerable interval must elapse between the two exercises. It is wellnigh impossible to convert verse into a new form while the old form is still strong in the mind. The fragile and seemingly fortuitous mould in which verses are cast is, in truth, one of the most indestructible of man's many inventions.

Among the most remarkable achievements in literature is the Spenserian stanza of nine lines. It has been widely used by the poets but scarcely ever with Spenser's grace and melody. Not many children will come under the teacher's hand capable of constructing this stanza, but all should

have a chance to appreciate its sweet suppleness. The rhymes are *a b a b b c b c c*.

*The triolet.*

This is one of the French forms made popular in this country by Henley, Lang, Austin Dobson, and other writers. It is a particularly suitable exercise for children because it is a comparatively short-breathed flight, prolonging its term by a free use of echo lines. And one may fancy that its artlessness might be achieved by those sufficiently unsophisticated in the use of the pen to present artfulness in the guise of simplicity. William Sharp writes of 'These old French ways of verse-making that have been coming into fashion of late. Their fantastic surprises, the ring of their bell-like returns upon themselves, their music of triangle and cymbal. In some of them poetry seems to approach the nearest possible to bird song. That "triolet"—how deliciously impertinent it is! is it not?' Here is a triolet of Henley's to put the question to:

Easy is the Triolet,  
If you really learn to make it!  
Once a neat refrain you get  
Easy is the Triolet,  
As you see!—I pay my debt  
With another rhyme. Deuce take it,  
Easy is the Triolet  
If you really learn to make it.

As will be seen, the triolet consists of eight lines with two rhymes. The line is usually of three or four stresses in length. The first pair of lines are repeated as the seventh and eighth, while the first appears again as the fourth. The weak point in the triolet is the refrain, which, repeated at a somewhat short interval, may sound monotonous. The reader by contriving a change of speech accent in the repeated lines may often do something to vary the sameness.

Perhaps a simpler writing model than Henley's is—

2	Under the sun	<i>a</i>
2	There's nothing new.	<i>b</i>
2	Poem or pun,	<i>a</i>
2	Under the sun,	<i>a</i>
2	Said Solomon,	<i>a</i>
2	And he said true,	<i>b</i>
2	Under the sun	<i>a</i>
2	There's nothing new.	<i>b</i>

*Echo-writing in verse exercises* The device of echo-writing will be familiar to children through their poetry readings. Goldsmith compiled a very useful list of onomatopoeic words which might be read to and supplemented by the class. It will, of course, be pointed out that echo writing is not only, nor indeed chiefly, confined to single words. Read the passage from the 'Revenge' beginning

When a wind from the land they had ruined awoke from sleep,  
and point out how the on-gathering of the storm is reflected in the gradual upward surge of the language culminating in

And the whole sea plúnged and féll,

and then read Beaumont and Fletcher's invocation to sleep quoted by Mr Fowler in his note to No. 40 of the *Golden Treasury*, Bk. I. A violent contrast to this last is Southey's 'How the water comes down at Lodore', and if the two are read consecutively the exaggerated realism of Southey's method may be felt by the audience. The class should be set to look out echo passages in their anthologies. Direct exercises in onomatopoeia are rarely successful. They usually sound too much like Prideaux's 'Battle of Prague' and similar musical monstrosities and are vitiated by a fatal air of unreality. We want to show that a natural correspondence between sound and sense is common to all good writing. The finer use of echo-writing does not aim at a literal representation. It is altogether more subtle. Moreover, if the child sets out to manufacture echo-verse there is a danger of the sense being sacrificed to the sound. If an exercise is set, it should call for a contrast. Spenser's couplet—

Sleep after toyle, port after stormie seas,  
Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please,

might be dictated and the class asked to set the contrast to their own words. Or they might be asked for a stanza to illustrate Frank Craig's 'The Maid' (or any battle picture) and a David Cox or a Constable reprint (or any quiet landscape). Or—

In the afternoon they came unto a land  
In which it seemed always afternoon,

or—           A pleasing land of drowsy head it was,  
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye.

might be used as a heading to a stanza aimed at suggesting the warm sleepiness of a summer afternoon. Extra stanzas to 'The Brook' form a simpler exercise.

It must be pointed out that echo-writing is to be found in the movement as well as in the melody of verse. Read Yeats's 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' and 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' or Miss Macaulay's 'The Huguenot' so that the class feel the contrasted tempos. Point out that the rush of such a line as

O a gállant set were thēy,  
As they chārged on us that dāy,

is due to the small number of stresses and (in this case) to the comparative absence of long vowels. The drag of

And live alōne in the bēe lōud glāde,

is due to the number of stresses and particularly to the time taken to voice the long vowels.

#### *Parodies and humorous verse*

Many children have a sense of humour unutilized and probably unsuspected by the teacher. It belongs to the kingdom of farce rather than wit, to Max Adeler rather than Meredith. The appreciation of verbal subtlety is of slow growth both in men and nations, although a pun, if it be sufficiently obvious, is as much relished by the modern schoolboy as it was by the Elizabethan playgoer. Such a poem as Praed's 'School and Schoolfellows' (in at least one school anthology) will be listened to with a most heart-breaking solemnity, while 'Gilpin', 'The Pied Piper', or Hood's 'Ben Battle', can always be sure of their laugh. But the cultivation of a sense of humour is of such real importance, that at least the teacher should be at pains to discover who possesses it and who (a smaller number) can achieve humour on paper.

Verse is a very suitable medium for humorous writing. I remember a very stolid boy producing a rhymed pen-picture of a class mate, the last couplet of which astonished me and convulsed his hearers:

Old East's so fat he rides in a cart:  
If he had to walk, it would break his heart.

One curious thing about schoolboy humour is the extraordinary effect which such perfectly serious words as 'monkey', 'whiskers', 'sausages' (but especially 'sausages'), has on the majority of children. It may be that there is something exquisitely humorous in the sound of 'sausage'; it certainly is the Mesopotamia of schoolboy humour. The *Oxford Book of Light Verse* will provide the teacher with material for his readings.

Parody is a difficult exercise. The successful parodist must be able both to strip his author to the bone and to wear his clothes with assurance. It is rarely done well even by skilled writers. As D'Israeli points out, it is really a critical exposition. But parodies should be read occasionally, both for pure fun and for the valuable light which they throw on the original. There is not a great wealth of parody in English suitable for children, but Calverley's mock ballad with the refrain 'Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese', his delicious parody of Tennyson's 'Brook', and Lewis Carroll's parody of *Hiawatha* are appreciated in the class-room.

New nursery rhymes may be attempted, verses in the local dialect, and certainly a set of verses on the organ-grinder's monkey. Children rarely make good nonsense verses. A conscious sense of the fantastic is required to write such a poem as Lewis Carroll's 'The Porpoise and the Snail' and this appears to be absent in children; they are inclined to be literal, even in their dreams.

#### *Alliteration in children's verse*

I am a Sotherne man,  
I cannot geste rom ram rafe by my letter.

says Chaucer; but alliteration is so native in English verse that, be they southern or northern, children will use it unconsciously. It should therefore be dealt with as an ornament which may attract or distract the ear, as it is used wisely or foolishly. The crude alliteration of the popular advertisements may be set against a good line,

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers of rose blowing bushes.

Further, the subtle alliteration of middle consonants

may be contrasted with the alliteration of initial letters and with assonance, as in the o's in the above line, and in

All day the wind breathes low with

1

mellower tone

2

3

Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone

4

5

6

Round and round the spicy downs the

7

8

9

yellow Lotos-dust is blown.

10

11

12

When children revise their work with a view to removing jingles and clashes they might well use the opportunity to consider whether the alliteration (if there are examples) is crude or musical.

*The marking of the verse exercises.* The marking of verse exercises requires forethought on the part of the teacher. It is important to bear in mind the *raison d'être* of correction. Correction is not merely an opportunity for the zealous teacher to show his zeal, it is intended to make the child return on himself, to revise his work with something of the conscientiousness of the honest craftsman, and at the same time it should do something to prevent mistakes of a similar nature occurring again. This is a difficult matter, for the young are constitutionally averse from revising their work. They prefer to explore rather than to survey, and could wish to be on with the new love without having done justice to the old. How shall we organize verse correction for the benefit of the child? and what values shall we mark for?

Verse should be examined for false rhymes such as eye rhymes and assonances; smoothness, that is correctness of balance; fidelity to pattern of stanza with stanza and of each stanza as a unit; melody, which includes the avoidance of jingles and clashes; firm connexion of thought; correct grammar. This is not quite such a formidable list as it appears, for a great part of the work may be done orally. The rough draft of the exercise will be read aloud, either by the writer or, as I have suggested in another place, by a class mate. The class as a whole will criticize

the work by the standards suggested above; and this implies that they must know what to listen for. The writer should have the first opportunity of criticizing his own work, and during the class criticism he should sit pen in hand and if the criticism is upheld by the teacher (whose rôle is that of referee) he should make a note. Should he desire to do so, he should be allowed to reply to his detractors and to defend his work. After this oral criticism he is to make a fair copy and it is the copy which comes under the teacher's hand. This last correction will be pencilled on the exercise, and it gains enormously in value if teacher and child can work together. A system of marking signs is useful, but it should not be over-elaborated after the American manner. The following is a possible one, but doubtless each teacher will prefer to make his own. The letters are conveniently placed at the end of lines. R=imperfect rhyme. S=lack of smoothness. P=wrong form. M=Melody indicating the presence of jingles or clashes. C=lack of connexion. G=grammar. The corrected copy is then handed back, and if the child is interested in what he has done, he can be trusted to make a perfect copy in his common-place book. Probably the most fruitful of all correction is that which develops from a second detailed examination after a considerable lapse of time. It is doubtless employed by the poets. Teachers should make a practice of handing round verses at least a term old. Nothing but good can come of this. Mr. Barnett says that all clever boys write verses, the wise boys burn them. I should prefer the wise boys to hide them in their desks and return to them when the ardour of creation has passed out of the mind. It is excellent for the critical faculty, and a salutary lesson in humility.

In concluding this chapter I would permit myself the luxury of quoting that great critic, Hazlitt: 'Poetry is not a branch of authorship; it is the "stuff of which our life is made"'. Poetry is that fine particle within us that expands, rarefies, refines, raises our whole being; without it "man's life is poor as beasts". Man is a poetical animal, and those of us who do not study the principles of poetry act upon them all our lives, like Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who had always spoken prose without knowing it. The child is a poet, in fact, when he first plays

at hide-and-seek ; the shepherd-boy is a poet when he first crowns his mistress with a garland of flowers ; the countryman when he stops to look at the rainbow , the city apprentice when he gazes after the Lord Mayor's show.'

It was Stevenson who said that though we were all fine fellows, we could not pretend to write like Hazlitt. But Stevenson can go into good company, even including Hazlitt's 'It is said that a poet has died young in the breast of the most stolid. It may be contested, rather, that this (somewhat minor) bard in almost every case survives, and is the spice of life to his possessor. Justice is not done to the versatility and the unplumbed childishness of man's imagination. His life from without may seem but a rude mound of mud, there will be some golden chamber at the heart of it, in which he dwells delighted.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Most of the poems quoted or referred to in this chapter are to be found in *A Book of English Poetry*, edited by G. Beaumont, and published by T. C. & E. C. Jack.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE PROSE COMPOSITION EXERCISE

'I do not think that any language is better able to utter all arguments either with more pith or greater plainness than our English tongue is, nor any whit behind the subtle Greek for crouching close, or the stately Latin for spreading faire'

'Poetry was always my amusement, prose my study and business'

It is a familiar complaint made by all manner of people against all kinds of schools, that the English boy cannot write English. A recent writer on English composition (not by profession a schoolmaster) goes on to suggest that the English boy cannot write English because he is not taught how to write English, and gives chapter and verse to show that they 'do these things better in France'. It has even been hinted from time to time that schoolmasters themselves are not distinguished for the quality of their English, a criticism in which our ill-wishers will see a proof of Wilde's gibe 'He who can, does; he who can't, teaches'. The complaint as made against the primary schools, with which I am most concerned, usually comes from the employer who has discovered to his intense indignation that his office boy cannot write a business letter. We may well believe that the ability to 'indite a business communication' (to speak in the idiom of trade) is not the fine flower of good composition teaching; we may feel reasonably certain that the schoolboy of to-day writes better composition than his father did at a like age; and yet we cannot wholly dismiss these complaints as being merely the murmurings of disgruntled persons not averse from criticizing where there is little danger of retaliation. Admitted that the schoolboy might use his mother tongue with more ease and power, how are we to teach him to write better? Can we interest him in writing as a creative art, and a channel for the expression of personality? Is it possible to give him a conception of style? May anything be done to help him form a style of his own?

It may be said at once and with certainty that a knowledge of grammar will not go far towards solving these

problems. Heine remarks that if the Romans had had to learn the Latin Grammar they would not have had time to conquer the world; and it is true that many children have been (and still are) so occupied in learning grammar in order that they may avoid errors (mostly hypothetical), that they have little time for, and less interest in, the business of composition. Grammar as a royal road to composition has died of being found out. It was observed that many people wrote admirable English who were in no wise distinguished as grammarians; it was suspected that children who could parse and analyse the poets did not love poetry, and produced an average crop of errors in their written work.

‘Imperial Caesar dead and turned to clay,  
May stop a hole to keep the wind away’,  
*Great Caesar’s mind is turned to baser purpose,  
His book’s a mere grammatical excursus*

This is the heaviest indictment against grammar in schools—that it maintains itself as a parasitic growth on Literature.

There is a passage, pertinent and amusing, in Mrs. Gaskell’s *North and South*:

‘A, an indefinite article,’ said Margaret mildly. ‘I beg your pardon,’ said the vicar’s wife, all eyes and ears, ‘but we are taught by Mr Milsom to call ‘a’ an—who can remember?’

‘An adjective absolute,’ said half a dozen voices in chorus. And Margaret sat abashed. The children knew more than she did. Mr. Bell turned away and smiled.

The modern teacher has learned to smile with Mr. Bell. He remembers that inquiring young centipede who, though walking sufficiently well by the light of nature, in an evil hour fell to thinking which leg he should put foremost, and in the event got his limbs so irretrievably tangled, that he fell into the ditch.

Another factor which paralysed written composition in the past was the extraordinary themes children were expected to handle. A good composition theme should provoke the child to render up what is in him. The old written exercises rarely did this, and not nearly sufficient forethought is given nowadays to this vital matter. The importance of securing the child’s interest in his work has long been recognized by those whose business lies in the

schools; and yet it is constantly in danger of being forgotten. Interest is the mainspring of all good work and the absence of it converts work into drudgery. Moreover, if interest lapses during creation, there is a loss of freshness and power. This is evident even in the work of the masters. There are dull passages in Beethoven for example, barely saved from futility by sheer craftsmanship. There are scenes in which Shakespeare is less than himself, and pages in Milton which the lover of the poet wisely avoids.

If interest is indispensable to the best work of the genius, it is no less so to the best work of the child. The painful joy of creating, which is the artist's sure and often solitary reward, is born of Interest out of Power. The child, who resembles the artist in his sincerity, as well as in his gift of make-believe, feels this, although his teacher has probably forgotten it. That is why the attempt to thrust an outside point of view upon him is foredoomed to failure. His best work must come out of himself, and the wise teacher is he who is content to ease the pains of labour without making also an unnatural effort to father the offspring.

When interest is secured, the child's work begins to come alive. Otherwise it may indeed come to a finish under the sharp spur of necessity, but the horse becomes jaded, and the prize is lost. Lack of interest was the weakness of the old composition themes. What really intelligent child ever wanted to write or talk about lead, unless his father happened to be a plumber? And many present-day themes, which seek to extort information in a less obvious manner, are as dull as the old ones and rather more foolish. Where is the child who really desires to be a boot-lace or an old pen? The answer is, that the child exists not in the flesh but in the teacher's supposition. And this brings us face to face with the larger half of our problem. What are the themes which interest the human boy? What is it that he really wants to say or write?

It is a very real problem, and it is not to be solved by pretending it is not there. The really great teachers never grow up, and for them it is very literally child's play. They see life through unsophisticated eyes; and

By the vision splendid  
Are on their way attended.

But most of us do grow old ; and how are we to enter into the kingdom of the child ? It may be that by taking pains we can subtract the necessary cubit from our stature. There is, to begin with, some help in books. Kenneth Grahame's *Golden Age*, Stevenson's *Virginius Puerisque*, Dr. Brown's essay in *Horae Subsecivae* on little Marjorie Fleming, the playmate of Scott, are valuable text-books for the teacher, and rather less bleak of aspect than certain professional literature. But above the value of books is the value of observation and experiment. Darwin gave some of his best years to the study of the earth-worm ; if we give some of our best hours to the study of the child, he, at least, will not go unblessed.

It is heartening to remember that we approach our problem with at least one notable asset. The written work of children is not likely to be marred by the feeble *clichés* and hackneyed expressions of popular journalism. The syntax may be marked with the abandon characteristic of the young, but some compensation will be found in that freshness of outlook and quaintness of phrase which so often charms in immature work.

The observation and experiments spoken of above are now being made by a growing number of teachers, and intelligent opinion is prepared to allow an axiomatic value to the following statements :

(a) Composition provides the individual with a means of communicating with others ; it may and should provide him with a means of communing with himself.

(b) The nature of the composition exercise is of the first importance.

(c) It should challenge interest and stimulate performance.

(d) It must bear a real relation to the child's emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual outlook.

(e) Systematic composition teaching is necessary.

I want to say something of this last matter before dealing with the composition exercises. While it is incontestable that the study of grammar does not ensure correctness in writing, it is equally true that definite and systematic composition teaching is desirable. It is not nearly sufficient to give children their head in the reading periods and expect that correct writing will follow.

Intelligent children may always be trusted to acquire composition through their reading. 'It is remarkable' (says an old biographer of Cowley) 'that he had this defect in his memory, that his teachers could never bring him to retain the ordinary rules of grammar, the want of which, however, he abundantly supplied by an intimate acquaintance with the books themselves from which those rules had been drawn.' We do not find it so remarkable nowadays as they did in the eighteenth century. We are coming to see that the lack of method of Cowley may be more valuable than the method of Cobbett, who dedicated a formidable grammar to his son in order to improve the boy's composition. Nevertheless some formal composition teaching which shall concern itself more with the technique of writing and less with the vagaries of syntax is badly needed in the schools. It is the more needed, because there is a noticeable tendency to restore a modified grammar which in effect, it is to be feared, will be indistinguishable from the old gerund-grinding.

Nor will incidental teaching during the marking of the composition exercise—excellent practice though this is—supply all that is needed. And there is the more need for intelligent composition teaching, because although it may be true that style, unlike grammar, cannot be learned or acquired, yet it may be developed or it may atrophy. It is also true that the art of writing has been more persistently neglected in the schools than any other of the arts which appear in the curriculum. How rarely indeed is writing conceived as being an art at all? How often is it treated solely as a means to an end? Our teaching in this subject must spring from a lively belief that good writing is of the same nature as drawing or music. It is not to be confounded with journalism, with business correspondence, nor yet with popular literature. It is not purely informative, as in the page of the reporter, nor yet purely representational, as in the conversations of most modern novels. 'In contemplation it rediscovers beauty and truth, in tranquillity it re-creates them by the suggestion of essential emotions.' It is not to be expected that children will be brought to a knowledge of these high matters; but it is certain that unless the teacher has some conception of the artistic values underlying good writing, his teaching

will remain largely sterile and no collection of composition 'tips' (to use the elegant language of the less reputable school publisher) will avail.

The unit of writing is the sentence. Sentences are divided, according to their construction, into three great classes, the Loose, the Periodic, and the Balanced; and each class exhibits variety within its own limits. The unit of argument is the Paragraph. Each paragraph deals with one particular aspect of the subject, and is frequently introduced by Topic sentences in which the key of the paragraph is to be found stated with boldness and brevity. Moreover, the end of the paragraph often contains in suggestion, if not explicitly, an introduction to the next paragraph and so reinforces that strength of paragraph sequence which comes from a proper ordering of the subject-matter. The manner of writing, whether grave, gay, melodious, animated, austere, is called Style. Style is a large word to use in connexion with children's work, but they may be helped to observe differences of style in their reading matter, and they should attempt from time to time in their writing broad differences of treatment and imitation of manner. Lastly, there is the consideration of the actual subject-matter.

Our composition teaching then will concern itself with the manipulation of the Sentence, the arrangement of the Paragraph, the variations of Treatment, the selection of Matter.

Examine for a moment the structure of the following sentences:

(a) 'I came here to meet my son, who was to return to London when we had done our business.'

(b) 'On an evening in July, in the year 18—, at East D—, a beautiful little town in a certain district of East Anglia, I first saw the light.'

(c) 'Sudden prosperity had turned Garrick's head; continued adversity had soured Johnson's temper.'

In sentence (a) the thought is completed at the outset, and qualifications or additional details are added in a loose sort of sequence. This is the Loose sentence. It is the commonest variety in modern English. In sentence (b) both the interest and the thought are not complete until the sentence closes. This is the Periodic or Suspended

sentence. In sentence (c) the idea in the first part is balanced by what follows, and there is a corresponding balance of construction—'sudden prosperity' balances 'continued adversity'.

If children's work is examined it will be found that the Loose sentence is almost the only one in use; and some children scarcely ever progress beyond the first assertion.

When children can handle the simple sentence form with some certainty we may begin to practise them in varying the form. The simplest form of enlargement, and one which children readily discover for themselves, is to attach a second assertion to the first by the use of 'and' or 'but'.

'Mary has blue eyes, and she lives next door to me.'

When children make an extended use of this form, they frequently tack on so many assertions that the back of the sentence is broken. The poise of sentences of the  $a+b$  variety is endangered when it appears  $a+b+c$ , and destroyed beyond recovery when it is written  $a+b+c+d+$ , as in

'What he saw in her I cannot think, but I had it from his cousin Elizabeth Hazel, who is fitted to be a comfort to any man, if her nose was squeezed flat, when a baby, by falling out of a first floor window, waiting to see the firemen go by to put out no fire at all but only because the Mayor and Corporation had turned them out to show Mr Gladstone, who was being entertained in the Town Hall, how smart they could come up to scratch with their . . '

And as written by children, the form lacks variety. The first step is to establish the fact that the order of words in a sentence is capable of a great deal of variety. Such a sentence as 'The birds sang in the forest trees, but everything else was still' might be written on the black-board and afterwards re-arranged.

(a) 'The birds in the forest trees sang, but everything else was still'

(b) 'Everything else was still, but the birds sang in the forest trees.'

(c) 'In the forest trees the birds sang, but everything else was still.'

A sentence from the reading-book might then be selected, and the class set to re-arrange it in as many ways as possible. Before the written work is examined, attention

should be drawn to the fact that re-arrangement may alter the sense or even destroy it, just as it always alters the sound, whether for good or bad

'With the cross of his sword he dispelled the terrors of the dark and followed his lady till she reached the river bank on which they had first met'

'Till she reached the river bank on which they first met he followed his lady, and with the cross of his sword he dispelled the terrors of the dark'

The implication in the second extract is that the knight stopped his pursuit on the river bank. There is no such implication in the first arrangement. When the re-arranged sentences come to be examined there will be a good deal of evidence that the sense is liable to derangement when the order of words is altered. The injury or improvement which re-arranging effects in the sound, is a more subtle matter to illustrate, because its recognition is only possible when the ear is trained. It will be best seen if a strikingly melodious sentence such as 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun' is recast.

After a fair amount of practice the class will be in a position to accept the truth that there is one order of words in a sentence which best conveys the sense, and possibly some may have a glimmering that the best order of sounds is almost always the best order for sense.

Without insisting on the name Periodic this form of sentence should be observed and commented on. It is a good plan to take a Loose sentence such as the one quoted previously and re-cast it in the Periodic Form. 'It was to meet my son, who was to return to London when we had done our business, that I came here.' The two forms should be written up side by side.

Point out that the Loose form completes itself as it goes along; there is no need to wait to the end to catch the sense. In the Periodic form the meaning of the sentence is not complete until the conclusion is reached. A Loose sentence should be taken to pieces in order to show that the thought is complete in a series of stages, and a like attempt may be made to take a Periodic sentence to pieces when the impossibility of cutting it into sections will be obvious. The mind constantly rests on a finality in the



Loose Form, and as constantly is set going afresh ; but in the Period there is an extended flight sustained by interest, which stretches over the whole sentence. Curiosity is satisfied by the Loose Sentence almost before it is aroused, whereas the Periodic Sentence makes use of suspense and, if the period is not too long, keeps curiosity alert until the close.

The class should be set to discover the Periodic Form in their reading-book and asked to turn loose sentences in their own written work into periodic. A very little examination of good prose will convince them that in the best writing the two forms relieve each other. Composition is the art of varying well.

The Balanced Sentence is too subtle in construction for any but the most exceptional children.

Striking variation or similarity of sentence construction should also be shown. Leigh Hunt's Essay, beginning

' Now the rosy—(and lazy—) fingered Aurora, issuing from her saffron house, calls up the moist vapours to surround her, and goes veiled with them as long as she can ; . . . Now the mower begins to make his sweeping cuts more slowly, and resorts oftener to the beer.

Now the carter sleeps atop of his load of hay . . . Now the little girl at her grandmother's cottage door watches the coaches . . . '

is a well-known example of similarity of sentence form ; it is an equally good piece of writing in the concrete. An exercise on a cold day to be written in a similar sentence structure, might be set.

Variations from the normal order are often made for the sake of balance, emphasis, or clearness, as in ' Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction '. Emphasis is also secured by a succession of short sharp sentences which take the understanding by storm.

There is a masterly use of the short sentence in the passage in *The Cloister and the Hearth* which tells of the fight at the inn between Gerard and Denys and the robbers.

' They took their posts. Denys blew out the candle. " We must keep silence now " '

But in the terrible tension of their nerves and very souls they found they could hear a whisper fainter than any man could catch at all outside that door. They could hear each other's heart thump at times.

" Good news," breathed Denys, listening at the door.

"They are casting lots"

There was a scuffling of feet heard in the kitchen, and then all was still. Denys took up his position behind the door. When they were almost starved with cold, and waiting for the attack, the door on the stairs opened softly and closed again. Nothing more. There was another harrowing silence.

Then a single light footstep on the stairs, and nothing more.

Then a light crept under the door; and nothing more.'

It will be observed that the use of two sentences of a fair length throws the short sentences into relief and saves the writing from monotony. There is a striking use of repetition. With this or a similar passage as a model, the description of a breathless incident such as a fire or a railway accident might be called for.

Senior children should be made acquainted with the evil effect of clashes and jingles on sentence melody. The whole matter is dealt with in the discussion on Melody in the chapter on Appreciation, to which the reader is referred for examples and comment.

The orderly arrangement of material is of extraordinary importance in the writing of English, and the secret of a good order lies in the mastery of the paragraph. Inconsequence, either of matter or manner, is fatal; it dissipates both the writer's strength and the reader's interest. The reader who is not sure of his whereabouts is apt to suspect that the author is equally uncertain. It is one of the commonest faults in children's work, but the critic should remember that inconsequence both of action and thought is a characteristic of the young, and further that what is palpably inconsequent to the adult, may not appear in the least so to the child. Good paragraphing is the writer's sure ally. Through the art of the paragraph the reader is persuaded into an amenable frame of mind. He accepts the author's meaning without effort and without tears. And good paragraphing will so dispose the argument as to secure the natural momentum which is inherent in all material when it is skilfully arranged.

What are the marks of a correct use of the Paragraph?

They are, as given in the Composition Manuals:

1. The most important rule for the paragraph is to maintain unity.
2. The beginning of the paragraph should indicate the

theme Sometimes the theme is given out at the end of the paragraph.

3. Paragraphs should be relevant one to another; they should come in natural and orderly sequence; they should, if necessary, be linked by connectives, sometimes looking forward, sometimes looking back

It is not to be expected that beginners' paragraphs will attain this ideal. Nor can it be hoped that they will consciously set their course by these marks. But the teacher should keep them in view.

It is the common practice to delay paragraph writing until the upper part of the school is reached, for the very plausible reason that younger children do not produce work of sufficient length to make paragraphing convenient, or even possible. This is regrettable. Even in the lower classes children should be instructed to begin a new line whenever their subject divides itself afresh. I am opposed to any naming of the paragraph themes, still more to the entering of suggested headings on the blackboard before the writing begins. Any such help is quite contrary to the best interests of the children themselves. They must be trained in organizing their own matter, and it may very well develop on lines which the teacher (to whom such a theme as 'My Cat' is a mere abstraction) could not possibly foretell. The Browns' cat, for example, might in part payment for many unavenged indignities, have recently scratched baby Brown's nose, and very properly Brown junior would think the tragedy of sufficient interest to merit a paragraph.

Class discussion where the theme is a matter of common knowledge is another affair, but even here suggestion by the teacher may be a positive hindrance to free expression.

The first exercises in paragraphing should be taken as an oral composition exercise, and the paragraphs built up on the blackboard. It is a good plan to instruct young children to draw in the margin a little sign-post (so), whenever their matter takes a fresh turn, and fanciful inscriptions (which will be excellent practice for the skeleton outlines of a later stage) might appear thereon.





When the serious study of the Paragraph is commenced it will be necessary to show good models. This is the more necessary because the child is hampered by the bad paragraphing of many school books, in which the paragraphs are not real paragraphs at all, but simply sections of a convenient length for reading aloud.

For those who admire clear thinking and skilful arrangement of matter (the two are almost synonymous) Macaulay is an honoured name. Almost any page of his history will supply able work in this kind, and whether he is represented—as he ought to be—in the children's prose anthology, or no, the discussion on paragraphing might well be based on his page.

The unity which has been noted as a law of the Paragraph is so frequently broken in children's work, that every effort should be made to secure conformity to this first and greatest law. A grotesque example might be manufactured by the teacher for the occasion and entered on the blackboard. After comment and contrast with a good model, the next step will be to discover further examples of disunity in the written exercises of the class, and it is advisable to let each child criticize not his own but his neighbour's work. If the instances are read aloud there is the more chance that the ears of authors will convince them of sin. Digressions in the paragraph often justify themselves in skilful hands, and they are the very essence of such a writer as Lamb, but they are fatal to ordinary mortals; as edged tools they should be forbidden to children.

The theme is usually stated at the beginning of the paragraph by means of a 'topic' sentence, as in the following:

'I returned home, and soon after set out on my journey with unworn heart and untired feet. My way lay through Worcester and Gloucester, and by Upton, where I thought of Tom Jones and the adventure of the muff.'

Giving out the subject in Sonata Form is an exact parallel in music, and if the children are receiving any training in musical appreciation the cross reference will very naturally be made. After attention has been called

to the topic sentence, and its usefulness both to the reader and the author commented on, the class may be set to discover topic sentences from the reader, and they should occasionally be challenged to underline what they intend as the topic sentence in their own paragraphs. An interesting exercise is to read out the latter part of an incoherent paragraph (a speech of the garrulous Miss Bates in Jane Austen's *Emma* is the kind of thing), and ask the class to suggest in writing a key sentence to the extract. The ludicrous misfits will do more than anything else to indicate the use and importance of topic sentences.

If the matter has been working up to a climax, the theme, reinforced by all that has gone before, may be given out again or even stated for the first time at the close of the paragraph. But this is a refinement beyond the average child. Simple narrative prose rarely requires a topic sentence.

The relevancy of paragraphs to each other may be best practised by setting an exercise which calls for a time sequence. This need not, and in the earlier years should not, demand the chronology of history. Indeed large spaces of time are difficult for children to comprehend, still more to handle in writing. A better way is to take such an exercise as *My First Ball*. (a) Getting ready. (b) The Ball. (c) The Morning After. Or *A week's work in the Garden*. Exercises such as these are a very useful preliminary to questions in history where children, if left to their own devices, will frequently look back and crane forward in the most provoking manner.

The sequence of paragraphs depends a great deal upon the intention of the writing. The early paragraphs have the advantage of position, and are often used to state the main contentions of the argument which is developed in subsequent paragraphs. This is notably so in the letter.

*James Howell to the Rt. Hon. Lady Scroop, Countess of  
Sunderland*

Stamford: Aug 5, 1628

\* MADAM,—I lay yesternight at the post house at Stilton, and this morning betimes the postmaster came to my bed's-head, and told me the Duke of Buckingham was slain.

Upon Saturday last, which was but next before yesterday, being Bartholomew eve, the Duke did rise up in a well disposed humour out of his bed, and being ready, and having been under the barber's hand . . . '

Here the plunge is taken directly in a sentence which is important enough to form a paragraph by itself. If this method is reversed, and the interest gradually heightens to a close, the device is called Climax

The neat connexion between paragraphs, which Henley may have had in mind when he criticized a writer for not 'joining up his flats', is an excellency beyond the reach of children

In addition to paragraphing their own work, children should from time to time be set to amend faulty paragraphing in reading matter. In the early stages the child should be instructed to number or letter his paragraphs in the margin. This will tend to separate the paragraphs in the child's mind, and will also be a convenience to the teacher when he comes to criticize the work. Paragraphing will be referred to again in the next section, when plan-making is considered.

#### GATHERING AND CHOOSING WRITING MATERIAL

A great deal may be done to lighten the task of gathering and selecting material by setting suitable themes. The importance of the theme has already been spoken of, and will be dealt with in detail in the next section. But when the theme has been chosen, material may remain to be gathered, or selected, or both.

How is it possible, and how far is it legitimate to help the child to his material, and—a much more important question—how can he be helped to garner and select material himself?

Cobbett gives the facile answer. 'Never write about any matter which you do not well understand. If you clearly understand all about your matter, you will never want thoughts, and thoughts instantly become words.' And again: 'The order of the matter will be, in almost all cases, that of your thoughts. Sit down to write what you have thought, and not to think what you shall write.'

Unfortunately this is a counsel of perfection. If the

writing of children were limited to what they 'well understood' their output would be infinitesimal. Furthermore, one way of arriving at an understanding of a subject is to write about it; and even when the mind is stored and interest engaged, there is embarrassment as to the precise material to be used, or equally important, discarded; moreover, the ordeal of examinations will constantly call upon the student to write on subjects about which he possesses a certain amount of knowledge but little or no interest.

In discussing the matter of selection with children I have found the homely illustration of setting the table for a meal both useful and suggestive. The meal is a selection from the contents of the larder, and the selection will vary in accordance with the purpose for which it is intended. Just so the feast of language is selected from the general storehouse of knowledge and varies in accordance with the intention of the writing. It is the intention of the writing that consciously governs the selection of material. Hence the importance of the child knowing his aim before starting out. It is more important to tell the child what to aim at in a particular piece of writing than to tell him what to write about. If, for example, the class are set a piece of description 'On Mary Smith' and the teacher suggests that they write so that a stranger coming into school could identify Mary Smith after reading their description, there will be the less likelihood of such a ridiculous superfluity as 'Mary Smith has two eyes', the like of which is frequently found in young children's writing. Occasionally the same subject should be set again with a different intention, as for instance:

(a) Describe the schoolroom so as to make a picture of it for a blind boy.

(b) Describe the schoolroom so as to recall it to an old scholar who has been abroad for many years.

or—

(a) A day's perch fishing written by the angler.

(b) The same fishing as recounted to admiring companions by the record fish who broke the line.

Often it will be an advantage to have the aim stated at

the head of the exercise ; even if this is not done, the child should be under no illusion as to what he is attempting. But it is to be feared that too often he has no avowed intention at all. The success or failure of the expressed aim will not be lost sight of when the exercise comes up for marking.

In the upper school there will be an increasing use of books as quarries for material. The results are very often disappointing either because of the condensed and technical manner of the reference book, or because the book of whatever sort is used for both foundation and superstructure.

How is the child to make use of this material ?—

*Butterflies*—see *Lepidoptera*

*Lepidoptera*—*Lepidoptera* have been divided into *Macrolepidoptera*, the larger forms, and *Microlepidoptera*, comprising only the clothes-moth family, *Tineidae* and *Torbricidae* (and so on)

If the child survives the reading of this, it will be with powers so impaired as to make the subsequent composition a very poor performance. The only remedy is to try and arrange that the child shall not have need to quarry quite such intractable material.

A too free use of the book is more easily dealt with. A fair interval must elapse between the reading and the writing. If the exercise is set in the first person, if for example the boy has been sent to Froude's Elizabethan seamen for the preparation, and the composition takes the form of a ship boy's diary on the *Golden Hind*, it will not be possible for the young writer, who has never heard of plagiarism and is not afflicted with 'writer's conscience' to commit such wholesale robbery as he otherwise would.

The question of the preliminary plan or skeleton naturally occurs here. The practice of the expert, when it can be come by, is not without interest and value. What would one not give, for example, for a rough draft of *Tom Jones* ? 'Such reliques', as Johnson said (after seeing the Milton MSS. at Cambridge), 'show how excellence is acquired ; what we hope ever to do with ease, we must learn first to do with diligence.' Of such drafts as are on record, perhaps the most interesting, though unfortunately it is



hardly suitable for the class-room, is Dr. Johnson's own sketch of the life of Pope quoted by D'Israeli in his *Curiosities of Literature*. It may be believed that many writers never made use of a plan. How could Sterne or De Quincey plan their work? and probably more plans are discarded than used. Some writers on composition would insist on the plan being rigidly adhered to, and allow of no variation in treatment such as frequently occurs to a writer during the progress of his theme. In a sense this is to sacrifice the composition to the plan, but the truth is, that this is a matter to be settled by the individual. To some the plan is a help, to others a hindrance. Children's work almost always reads better if a plan is used, and without attaching quite as much importance to it as does Mr. Hartog in the *Writing of English*—for a good plan does not of necessity mean a good composition—it is still of sufficient importance to warrant close attention. It is not surprising that French teachers, as Mr. Hartog points out, lay very great stress on the plan. The French mind is much more logical than ours, and it may be remembered that Flaubert urged against English writers that they did not plan their work. If the subject is common to the class, possible plans may be discussed before the writing begins but they should not be written on the blackboard. And just as a pencil sketch is often partly finished in detail and the rest planned out, so writing may be accepted partly in detail, provided that a plan of the whole is submitted.

There used to be a favourite formula for answering history questions which ran, i. Causes, ii. Events, iii. Results, and which had at least a sort of massive simplicity and even light-heartedness to recommend it. But a more satisfactory form for general use is, i. Beginnings, ii. Middles, iii. Endings. With these headings as landmarks, the plan may be introduced to the class by taking to pieces a letter or a short essay and building up a plan from the written evidence. Then some general subject might be chosen (Cats, for example) and various quite simple plans built up in a class discussion, still using the general headings. At least two plans should be considered.

## Cats.

- i. Beginning. Cats are a nuisance.
- ii. Middle.
  - a. They make a hideous noise in the night.
  - b. They are great thieves
  - c. They insist on sleeping in the most comfortable chairs.
- iii. Ending. Remedies against cats.
  - a. Keep a dog
  - b. The use of boots and other missiles.

## Alternative plan.

- i. Beginning. The cat is the friend of man.
- ii. Middle. The good points of the cat.
  - a. He is a clean animal.
  - b. He catches mice.
  - c. He is not so noisy or savage as the dog.
- iii. Ending. How to care for cats.
  - a. Give them plenty of milk
  - b. Reserve all the most comfortable chairs for their use.
  - c. Never throw boots at them.

Two very important points arise for discussion. The first plan is obviously the work of a 'catophobe', the second that of a 'catophilist'. Both plans represent a definite point of view: this should be strongly emphasized. A good composition shows that the writer has taken a definite 'line'. His writing is not anybody's work. It is a strictly individual thing. And this is one of the reasons why plan-making is useful. It clarifies thought before writing begins and it settles the 'line' which the writer is to take. The second point is that the plan fixes the paragraphs, and the plan headings with a little adaptation may be used as 'topic sentences' for the paragraphs in the writing. It should not be possible to discuss plan-making without a reference to the prose argument of *The Ancient Mariner* if only to show that fine work has been done even with such ungrateful material as plan-making. And the teacher should hold up for example instances of good beginnings and good endings in literature (middles

can be left to take care of themselves), and further set the class to discover like instances in their reading. Hazlitt's beginnings are uncommonly good: this for example from the essay 'On the Want of Money', 'It is hard to be without money.' One is reminded of a trained sprinter getting off the mark. Bacon has some magnificent endings in the Essays.

'Certainly, Vertue is like pretious Odours, most fragrant, when they are incensed, or crushed: For *Prosperity* doth best discover Vice; but *Adversitie* doth best discover Vertue'

There is a fine finality about this; it reads as if it were—for all time—the last word on the matter.

When the plan is used, it should be entered on the opposite page to that on which the written work begins. The workshop page is as essential to the writing book as the margin is to the exercise book in arithmetic. In addition to the plan, false starts, alternative expressions, trial phrases, spelling guesses, in short all the débris of writing which otherwise would be surreptitiously littered on the blotting paper or desk, should find a recognized home on the workshop page. This practice will be found to justify itself in neater phrasing and a higher general level of work. The method of re-copying the whole composition in order to secure a neat page, which is not unknown in primary schools, has nothing to recommend it. But it is idle to expect the child to produce his best work if he is denied the opportunity to use his second thoughts. Rather should he be encouraged in every possible way to self-correction. It may be said with certainty that self-correction is the most valuable, perhaps the only fruitful, kind of correction, and the writer, young or old, who does not acquire the habit, may perhaps please himself in his own writing, he will certainly please no one else.

#### ON STYLE

There is no question of formal teaching in so subtle and impalpable a matter as style. All that can be done and all that it is desirable to attempt, is to accustom children to good company, and provide them, through imitation exercises, with an occasional opportunity of trying on a style if only to convince them that what is an excellent

dress for one man's thought, is nothing more than a reach-me-down on another person.

There is perhaps a further reason why imitation of style should be provided for. Through it a child is brought to a richer realization of the lettered past. It is not always possible in the history lesson to show children the vestiges of the past; it is always possible to show them the ancient monuments of words. If for example a boy is studying the Elizabethan period, it may not be possible to show him an Elizabethan manor-house, but it is possible to show him a page of Hakluyt. And if he is led to compare such a piece of writing as Raleigh's *Voyage up the Orinoco* with a modern page such as Wallace's *Voyage up the Amazon*, he will be in the way to realize that English is no upstart language but a venerable growth which has its roots far back in time. Still more will he realize the historic continuity of his own speech, if he is set to fashion in the style of Hakluyt or Mandeville a canoe trip up his own river, or a journey with a scout's handcart across his own plains. It is to be anticipated that children will have gained some acquaintance with, it may be even some relish for, the savour of style through their reading and work in Appreciation. But neither reading aloud nor silent reading will quicken the perception of style quite so effectually as an attempted imitation.

It is well to choose for the earlier exercises some writer whose style is markedly different from the modern idiom. Such a piece of writing as Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* is very suitable. The extract selected should be read aloud, and any out-of-the-way expressions commented on. It will be an advantage if there is a copy of the extract (such as might well be found in the prose anthology) for each child's reference. The expressions selected for comment should be entered at the head of the writing in some such form as the following:

Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*.

Note—'Why do you not come at them?'

I had a great mind to see how things were managed.

'I have gotten four shillings,' said he.

Such harbours as they could best come at.

Exercise.—Extract from Dr. Smuth's *Journal of the Influenza Year* in the style of Defoe.

There is not, of course, any particular value in using such obsolete expressions as the above, merely because they are obsolete. The value lies in bringing the child to realize that the manner of saying a thing is worth examination quite apart from the subject-matter, and that one of the best ways of examining a piece of writing is to try and make a passable imitation of it. From this point of view it is justifiable to imitate the quaint turns of idiom, and the unfamiliar expressions, because their very quaintness makes them easily recognized, and easily imitated. There are certain positive writing values in Defoe which the teacher will try to point out before the writing begins, in the hope that some shadow of them may show in the child's work. The first and the easiest for the child to understand, is the forthrightness of Defoe's work, his use of the concrete, his avoidance of periphrasis—qualities which moved Hazlitt to exclaim that his writing left an impression on the mind more like that of things than words. Defoe commonly calls a spade a spade, rarely a shovel, never an agricultural implement. If the teacher can compare Defoe's style with some more than particularly woolly piece of writing from newspaper, popular literature, or the like, it will be of no small help.

It may be objected that all this is Parody, and the answer is, that unfortunately it is no such thing. Parody is an excellent exercise. It calls for a just appreciation of the author parodied and a genuine critical acumen. It is an exercise for adults.

If the passage selected for imitation can be exhibited in the original spelling dress, there is a distinct gain as well as (to some eyes) an added charm.

When in one night, ere glumps of morn  
His shadowy Flae hath thresh'd the Corn  
That ten day-labourers could not end,  
Then lies him down the Lubbar Fend  
And stretch'd out all the Chumney's length  
Basks at the fire his hairy strength

Here it will be seen that the old spelling preserves a rhyme and so gratifies ear as well as eye. Children may hardly be expected to relish the flavour of ancient spelling as such, nor indeed can some adults. I once saw the word 'compleat' in a Free Library copy of Walton's *Angler*, carefully

corrected to 'complete'. But there is little doubt that the original spelling, if it can be shown in print, will help in conveying the impression of age.

Direct imitation of an author raises the question of the child's vocabulary. Some interesting tests for the measurement of vocabulary have recently been used by American teachers working on the lines of Binet. Two facts emerged quite clearly—that the vocabulary of children of the same age varies surprisingly in extent, and further, that the range of the vocabulary is a reasonable guide to the quality of the intelligence. A somewhat unpleasant and easily verifiable fact is that the vocabulary does not grow after the age of eleven, at anything like the same rate as it does before the age of eleven. The work of elder children is only a little more fluent—usually they get a larger composition period so that this is not altogether a net gain—the sentence forms are not noticeably firmer or more varied, but above all the vocabulary of elder children does not show such an advance as might be anticipated. In primary schools, it is probable that after the age of ten or eleven, perhaps earlier, the home contributes very little to the child's vocabulary. He must as a rule draw on his reading, on the teacher, and on the street for new words. The outstanding importance of the teacher's speech has been referred to in other connexions, it is of equal importance here. The new words which the teacher uses are likely to be of more service to the child than those he finds in books, and the context of the teacher's speech being simpler than that of books (or it should be), the meaning of the word is much more likely to be disclosed. On the other hand, the book has the obvious advantage of being a permanent record. More might be done to help the child to profit by the teacher's richer vocabulary than is done at present. At the end of the lesson, the teacher should never omit to ask if there are any words which any child would like explained. From time to time a child should be told off to jot down, while the lesson is in progress, a list of unfamiliar words, to be looked out later in the dictionary, and used in sentences during a speech lesson.

More might also be done to explore the other great source of vocabulary—the book. Silent reading will insensibly enlarge the vocabulary, but the growth is slow.

Children should be encouraged to jot down during their reading unfamiliar words or phrases with a view to using them in composition. They might have a separate space reserved for them at the back of the writing book,<sup>1</sup> and if the pages of the reader are entered at the end of each list, reference if it is needed will be an easy matter. When the words or phrases come to be used, it will be necessary to distinguish them in some way, in order that the teacher may see if the use is correct. A small question mark entered over the word or phrase is a neat way of doing this. Some teachers object to any attempt at vocabulary building, on the ground that the child's vocabulary is a natural growth and corresponds to his mental needs. But the taking of live words and phrases from a body of reading matter is not quite the same thing as building up dead lists of words from suffixes and affixes. In any case the child's vocabulary is of such importance, that the teacher should be very sure that he is in the right before deciding not to concern himself with it in any way.

Teachers are sometimes urged to have an eye to the pruning of the child's vocabulary, in order that he may not be betrayed into what is known as fine writing. The advice is dubious. It is quite natural with children in the teens to use words and expressions which are too big for them, just as it is natural for younger children to delight in trying on their elders' wearing apparel. Young writers are acquiring their instrument, and the aim should be to encourage them to experiment with as many stops as possible. A chaster combination, and a quieter tone, are the marks of one who has mastered the resources of his instrument. It is idle to expect them in the beginner. Verbosity—it has been well said—is best cured by a large vocabulary. But there are warnings which may usefully be given, and even commands which should be stringently enforced.

The first warning has to do with a style of journalese which—in the words of a living master of English prose—'makes a direct appeal to the sensorium, (so that) the bullet invariably sings, an aeroplane never forgets to drone, and a shell can be trusted at all times to scream'. Children are in danger of catching this infection from the

<sup>1</sup> Or they might be entered on the 'work-shop' page.

writing under cinematograph pictures. If and when it shows itself in their composition, it should be ruthlessly censored.

Then there is the style—it is difficult to describe it—but the following from a publisher's catalogue is a good specimen

'I have *perused* the parcel of books you sent me, and have no hesitation in saying that they are all *eminently suitable* for use in our Elementary Schools'

This is the language of Government departments; only in such exalted places are books 'perused' rather than 'read', and because it is altogether a more languid creation than the reposeless journalese spoken of above, it is less infectious among the young. But children should be warned against the benumbing effects of the idiom.

Lastly, there are phrases which should be placed in a chamber of literary horrors, and forbidden: such as 're', commonly found in business letters, '&c.' a sure sign of laziness or ignorance, 'the same' or 'same' as in 'I have received same', and the newly imported American use of 'some'.

#### CHILDREN'S EXERCISES

It is plain that the child expresses himself in many and various ways—through speech, through song, through bodily movements, through the work of his hands, as well as through writing. It is plain that expression through writing is a comparatively late growth, indeed, unless it is deliberately provoked by the teacher, it may remain latent through school life. Fortunately for our purpose, young children are interested in writing as a mechanical movement, so that the first (and last) problem of the composition teacher—the awakening of interest—does not press so hardly here as in the later stages. And the wise teacher will, as far as possible, link up the other interests and manifestations of the child with his written work. The handwork of young children may well provide useful exercises in written exposition. A child may, for example, after he has seen an illustration of a coracle, and expressed his conception in raffia or clay, set to work and describe, and possibly sketch his own model. Or he may, after the geography ramble, produce his map in pencil or clay, and re-express what it means to him in



writing. But the main approach to the written exercise will be made through speech, and this approach, although not essential in the upper classes, will never be laid entirely aside. A speech introduction to writing has signal advantages:

It gives the child a chance to collect his ideas about the work in hand, and at a stage when quantity and not quality is the primary aim, this is no small gain. Moreover, it brings the knowledge of the class under contribution, so that the individual may augment his own matter from the common stock.

It breaks the ground for exercises of a new type, or of a more difficult character.

It may stir a lively interest in the theme.

It is sowing for the future: fluent composition in the upper classes derives from speech training in the lower classes.

The written exercises will naturally at first be of the same character as the speech exercises. The child will put into writing what he is accustomed to describe in speech. The teacher will always seek opportunities of combining speech and writing. I have chosen the Interview, and an episode from history, as types of such exercises.

## COMBINED SPEECH AND WRITING THEMES

### *The Interview*

It is convenient to take this exercise shortly after a mock election. Some brief explanation of the function of an interviewer and the nature and use of interviews should be supplied by the teacher, and the interviewer should be instructed to make out his card of introduction and to prepare beforehand notes of the matter on which he seeks information. This is the usual form of card:

*L Collins*

*Oxford Times Representative*

The interview should take place in front of the class, and although the candidate will of necessity sustain his rôle throughout the whole of the exercise, the questions

addressed to him can be taken by members of the class in turn. The following written exercises will derive naturally from the speech :

(a) An account of the interview prepared by the interviewer for the newspaper he is representing. (N B —He should be allowed to note down in writing the gist of the candidate's answers )

(b) An election address to be prepared by the candidate for office, which should be posted by him on the class notice board.

(c) A letter addressed to the candidate by those members of the class not called upon for interview, asking for further information on points omitted from the interview or inadequately dealt with.

### *The Interview. Second style*

A second way of presenting this exercise is to instruct the class to prepare an advertisement for a situation. A good newspaper model should be shown and the essentials to be aimed at—brevity and completeness—should be discussed before the writing begins. Next the class should be set to write a letter of application setting out such qualifications and information as are thought useful. Then the employer will be selected, the letters passed up to him for inspection, and the interviews commence when he names those of the letter-writers who have impressed him as likely applicants. It is important that the occupations should be such as the children are likely to be familiar with. The staple industry of the district is not to be overlooked ; and the teacher will probably have to set his face against aspiring film artistes thrusting their claims upon the audience. But as a mild relaxation, an application and subsequent interview for a detective's or actress's post is to be commended ; these rôles are almost always provocative of speech and very amusing. The success of this exercise depends largely upon the questioning, and a board of directors will often keep the ball rolling better than an unsupported head of a firm.

### *Speech and writing themes in Class subjects*

A combined speech and writing presentation of the class subjects opens out a wide field. The following is a suggested treatment.

*Before and after Agincourt*

Suppose that the class have been preparing the French campaigns of Henry V, that Holinshed, Drayton's Poem, and Henry's speech from Shakespeare's play have been read to them, and that they are tolerably familiar with the circumstances which forced Henry to fight, and the tactics of the battle.

Fix the time as the night before the battle, and select three boys to impersonate French knights, and to speculate on the fight in front of them, and the chances of loot, body armour, horses, weapons, and ransom money. Or let two honest English yeomen from the same village discuss in a reminiscent vein the old home and the old folks, and the possibility of defeat on the morrow. Or have a French deserter brought before Henry and his captains, and cross-examined.

The written work would follow in something of this fashion:

(a) A letter by a French nobleman captured in the fight and now a prisoner in England, addressed to his father, and detailing the unlucky happenings at Agincourt, with some explanation of a defeat so galling to French pride, and a request that his ransom money shall be raised from his estates and sent to his captors.

(b) A letter from an English yeoman to his home folks, dwelling with pride on the completeness of the victory, and the valour of his king, detailing his experiences in the battle and giving tidings of the good or bad fortune of local men.

(c) A set of stanzas on the battle written after the model of Drayton's.

(d) A descriptive account, with drawings, of the loot secured by an English archer, written for the benefit and to excite the envy of a companion at home.

## WRITING THEMES

We are now to deal with the written exercises pure and simple. The order which the exercises here follow is in no sense an order either of difficulty or merit, nor does it pretend to any occult psychological significance. Some children will do the later exercises better than the earlier

and the best composition exercises for the child is, of course, the one he can do best. Similarly, the themes spoken of are intended rather to suggest lines of thought than to lay down grounds of procedure. No one can draw up a list of compositions with quite the same authority and usefulness as the teacher himself, and books which make a feature of cut-and-dried composition exercises are performing a very dubious service. The school environment (to mention only one factor) will exercise a controlling influence on themes. It would be out of place to expect country children to describe an electric tram, and 'Haymaking' would be equally unsuitable for town children.

Harking back to the great principle of interest, the first exercises to compel attention are those of which the child himself is the centre. In many of these exercises—notably those on hobbies—the child will be able to write with more authority than is usual in school compositions. A keen stamp collector or rabbit breeder, a fisherman or a fretwork amateur, may readily feel that he has something to say which is worth saying, some information to give which perhaps even his teacher does not possess. If the interest is sufficiently strong to keep the theme alive over more than one session, it is foolish not to take advantage of this. The expert can be asked to contribute a series of papers on his particular subject: his preliminary scheme will naturally be submitted to the teacher for criticism and approval.

There is really no reason why an artificial limit should be placed on the output by the common practice of setting a fresh theme for each exercise. In the early stages a good deal of time is used up in getting started. If the exercise is continued it will be very generally found that a bigger bulk of work will be produced in the second session than in the first, provided that the exercise is of a nature to induce fluency. When the work is continued, the child must be directed to read over what he has already written in order to set his ideas in train, but this takes considerably less time than the preparation for a fresh theme. And if the exercise makes demands on observation—as for instance a building, a picture, a bird's nest, or a frock—the break provides a fresh opportunity

for looking at the subject which may result in new matter being garnered; and it will strengthen that most valuable habit of looking at things twice. Practical and even technical details should be required where the work—as in the description of hobbies—calls for them. Thus, a boy who is describing a rabbit hutch of his own making, should indicate the kind of wood used, the cost of the material, and the actual measurements, and he might further be expected to furnish in the drawing lesson a plan of the hutch, drawn to scale.

A not inconsiderable proportion of the child's interest centres in the school itself. It is true that the interest of boys in the routine work of the school wanes rapidly, but with girls interest seems to be sustained for the larger part of school life. They can be expected to perform with gusto a set of variations on themes related to the classroom, while the same themes bore boys beyond the possibility of good work. The senior boy, many of whose friends are out in the mill, the factory, or the field, is often pathetically eager to take up his share of the world's work. He will be more likely to write well about themes connected with the labour of the district than about anything which goes on within the school walls.

Lastly, the child is interested in his own individuality—in his emotions, his hopes and fears—and he is curious about his kind. The child is not naturally reticent when he is sure of a sympathetic audience, but as with most of his elders his revelations are more easily thrown into speech than writing. For this reason, the human interest is most conveniently made use of in connexion with composition themes set on the reading book, when the characters make a convenient stalking-horse for his own personality. The range of such themes is illimitable. 'All that man may do and dare, all that man may be and bear'; thus, and no less, is the limit. The very wideness of choice makes selection not too easy a matter. But such bald and simple themes as 'The happiest day in my life', or 'The most miserable day of my life', 'A terrifying experience', usually awaken a ready response. The diary for senior children is an obvious form which exercises of this type may take. It can be set as a piece of autobiography: 'A diary of a week's holiday' or in such a form as 'A tramp's diary', 'My teacher's diary'.

## COMPOSITION THROUGH READING

Much attention has been paid of late years to the art of setting compositions on the reading matter, and a fair number of books of extracts are now on the market. The possibilities of such exercises are far reaching and important. They admit of a grading in difficulty; they acquaint the child with a variety of styles; they provide opportunity for that 'sedulous apeing' which bulks so largely in the young writer's apprenticeship; and (if both extract and exercise are happily chosen) they stir the imagination and rouse the interest. The story is the obvious approach to composition through reading, and is useful throughout the school. It is important to use good models. It is still quite commonly supposed that the content of the story is all important, the form negligible, and old myths go the school rounds in undistinguished dress. This is a great pity. Malory, Lamb, Hawthorne, Kingsley, Morris, Cowden Clarke, Church, Andrew Lang, have made literature of the legends and their work is in the school book catalogues. It should be preferred to the insipid writing of the professional school book-maker.

The story exercise should be introduced as a simple reproduction, but there are obvious ways whereby variety and scope for the imagination may be secured. The class may be asked to continue a story which has been read to them in part. Or they may be confronted with a striking situation, and asked to devise a reasonable chain of events leading up to it; or they may be set to work out a conclusion to events which have been previously described; as, for example, 'The Argonauts' journey home to Iolchos', which Hawthorne has omitted to describe. Or a child may be asked to introduce himself into a story and narrate his share of the action. 'Alan Breck, David Balfour, and Tommy Jones defeat the sailors on the brig *Covenant*' may suggest other combinations. Or the child may be asked to step into the shoes of any character he chooses and narrate in the first person. Story and original illustration may be combined and the quaint conceits of the young artist sometimes hit off the text very admirably.

Very seldom will the exercise of imagination all compact come under the teacher's blue pencil. It will usually be

found that the imaginative work of the child is strongly reminiscent of his reading ; nor can we expect his borrowings to be as happy as Dryden adjudges Ben Jonson's 'He invades authors like a Monarch, and what would be Theft in other Writers is only Victory in him', and indeed, where the form is fluid as in the prose writing, large borrowings are not culpable.

It may be helpful to set down a story and consider the exercises which may be derived from it, and, since the use of a fragment will admit of some few extra exercises, I have selected from the old French story of *Aucassin and Nicolette* as Englished by Pater.

Aucassin was put in prison, as you have heard, and Nicolette remained shut up in her chamber. It was summer time, in the month of May, when the days are warm and long and clear, and the nights coy and serene

One night Nicolette, lying on her bed, saw the moon shine clear through the little window, and heard the nightingale sing in the garden, and then came the memory of Aucassin, whom she so much loved. She thought of the Count Sarins of Beaucaire, who mortally hated her, and, to be rid of her, might at any moment cause her to be burned or drowned. She perceived that the old woman who kept her company was asleep ; she rose and put on the fairest gown she had, she took the bed-clothes and the towels, and knotted them together like a cord, as far as they would go. Then she tied the end to a pillar of the window, and let herself slip down quite softly into the garden, and passed straight across it, to reach the town.

Her hair was yellow in small curls, her smiling eyes blue-green, her face clear and feat, the little lips very red, the teeth small and white ; and the daisies which she crushed in passing, holding her skirt high behind and before, looked dark against her feet ; the girl was so white !

She came to the garden gate and opened it, and walked through the streets of Beaucaire, keeping on the dark side of the way to be out of the light of the moon, which shone quietly in the sky. She walked as fast as she could, until she came to the tower where Aucassin was. The tower was set about with pillars, here and there. She pressed herself against one of the pillars, wrapped herself closely in her mantle, and putting her face to a chink of the tower, which was old and ruined, she heard Aucassin crying bitterly within, and when she had listened awhile she began to speak

Now here is an extract which fulfils the considerations which should govern the selection of stories for use in schools. It is good in style ; it is intrinsically interesting ;

it is free from the suggestion of a moral. It might be treated in the following ways .

- (a) Write out the story in your own words.
- (b) Write it out in the first person as Nicolette.
- (c) Write down what you imagine the old woman to have said when telling the story of Nicolette's escape
- (d) Invent a beginning to this extract, accounting for the imprisonment of Nicolette.
- (e) Invent two endings to this extract.
  - (1) With the heading, ' And they were married on the morrow and lived happily ever afterwards '
  - (2) ' The course of true love never did run smooth '
- (f) Invent a sequence of events from the time that Aucassin hears Nicolette speaking at the foot of the tower.
- (g) Imagine that Aucassin is fast in prison and write down his conversation (as it takes place through the bars of the window) with Nicolette.
- (h) Imagine this incident shown on the picture screen, write a description and invent an appropriate title for the film.

It will be seen that exercise (g) is a duologue, a most useful writing form for children. The first duologues should be taken from life. Conversations as imagined between two boys after a school football match, between two railway travellers on the contents of the morning newspaper, between an old farmer and his labourer on harvest prospects (in dialect), between a soldier and a sailor on the services, are examples of this sort of work. They should be written in the proper duologue form. Many interesting duologues can be arranged between the quick and the dead. Pictures of fighting men, old and new style—an ideal selection already made is Rubens's Maximilian I and Sir William Orpen's British Airman—can be shown, and the duologue can be written as between Richard Longbow of the Duke of Bedford's bodyguard and Richard Smith of the 2nd Loamshires. It is essential that the human interest shall be secured for the duologues, and conversations between a pencil and an india-rubber and the like should not be expected. Lander's *Imaginary Conversations* are too difficult for children with the possible exception of *Leofric* and *Godiva*, which might be read to the class.

The duologue is the natural step to play-writing, which is



too important to be treated of within the limits of this chapter.

Elder children may be expected to weave their stories without quite so much help from the book. That is an admirable exercise for the imagination, which consoled Amyas Leigh for his enforced tedium in Bideford Grammar School. 'Now it befell, upon an afternoon, that he was very busy at a map or bird's-eye view of an island, whereon was a great castle, and at the gate thereof a dragon, terrible to see; while in the foreground came that which was meant for a gallant ship, with a great flag aloft, but which by reason of the forest of lances with which it was crowded looked more like a porcupine carrying a sign-post; and, at the roots of those lances, many little round o's whereby were signified the heads of Amyas and his school fellows.'

Here is an exercise ready to hand. The island should first be drawn, the openings, forests, headlands, rivers, named (an exercise as old as Adam), and the writing might take the form of a castaway's log. Often the imaginative stimulus may be, designedly, of the scantiest. Browning was caught out of himself by a single line,

Childe Roland to the dark tower came,

and the result was the poem of 'Childe Roland'. One or two words, Goose—tree; Boat—Indian, or a striking, perhaps an incomplete sentence, will often be successful as themes. Usually such themes should be treated as a short story, or if the subject chosen is purely abstract, a fable, as—A fable on Gratitude.

One of the reasons why the great authors are great is because they use their eyes to better purpose than ordinary mortals. Dickens is describing below the hiding-place of a murderer. 'The room in which he had shut himself up was on the ground floor, at the back of the house. It was lighted by a dirty sky-light, and had a door in the wall opening into a narrow covered passage or blind alley. It was a blotched, stained, mouldering room like a vault, and there were water-pipes running through it which, at unexpected times in the night, when other things were quiet, clicked and gurgled suddenly, as if they were choking.' Such rooms could be numbered by thousands in Dickens's London. Could anything be more insignificant, and yet how significant is

the picture. The room is more than described, it is interpreted

Description in children's exercises is very poorly done, and nowhere is this more apparent than in exercises derived from the story. It is an old and just complaint that children (but of course the charge would include most adults) fail to describe with anything like accuracy, objects which are literally under their very eyes. And the further charge is made that until they can describe faithfully the things they can see, they are not likely to describe faithfully things they cannot see. Description, whether actual or imaginary, is not an easy matter. It is eye-witnesses' testimony which is notoriously uncertain. It demands accurate observation, and the judgement of the artist. Details must not be obtruded, yet they must be used with sufficient freedom to sharpen the outline. Frequent and varied practice is essential. The imaginative theme has had a very long hearing in the primary school, and has perhaps somewhat overshadowed themes demanding the exercise of accurate observation. There will always be a place in Composition, and that a high one, for exercises designed to stimulate the imagination, and it is important to remember the justification for such exercises, because they will tend in the near future—indeed are already tending—to fall into quite undeserved disrepute.

Graphic and just description depends in the first place upon accurate and intelligent observation. Some writers are as sensitive to impressions as a photographer's plate is to sunlight, and absorb sights and sounds almost involuntarily. Not so children. Description must be prepared for. The earlier exercises should be written with the object in view. It is an interesting experiment to divide the class into three sections for a descriptive exercise. One section can be set to record their observation of a toy or a piece of apparatus, in writing, another section can treat the exercise in speech, while a third can draw what they see. From time to time the description can be rendered in all three mediums. The most suitable order for this experiment is, drawing, speech, writing. The objects to be described should be interesting in appearance. War souvenirs make excellent material. If the object is removed out of sight before the exercise is finished, and the

writing completed from memory, a very natural approach is made to remembered description. Description from memory should at first be limited to the concrete and to such objects as can be produced for inspection. The accuracy and adequacy of a piece of remembered description can then be checked by producing the object, calling upon individuals to read their work, and asking for criticisms or additions. The exercise can be readily extended to places and people—my fellow travellers in the bus · the town market-square—and if names are suppressed (algebraical symbols can be used instead), and the exercise read aloud, the subject, where it is a matter of common knowledge, ought to discover itself. It is scarcely necessary to say that a remembered description is always more effectively written, if the subject has been previously looked at with a writing intention. Just how much difference in firmness and clearness of outline depends upon looking with intention may be very readily discovered by setting a composition 'What I can see from the class-room window' with, and without preparation.

The value of practice in the description of the actual, will be seen when purely imaginative description is attempted. Many excursions into the realm of fancy are worthless because description is lacking in verisimilitude. Dickens, perhaps the keenest sighted among English writers, told Forster that at the very moment he sat down to write, he saw. That is why Dickens, even in his extravagances, is convincing. But children use a peculiarly blind pen.

Conviction is one of the marks of good writing. An incident in *Gulliver's Travels*, for instance, reads much more like the real thing than does a newspaper fact. Indeed, so unreal is much newspaper writing that the intelligent reader is prepared to believe that the reporter is the only authentic teller of fairy stories left to us. Of course, the power which enabled Dickens to see the creatures of his fancy much more effectively than most of us see our own boots, is not to be got by taking or—as is the practice of many modern novelists—forsaking pains. Like red hair, you either have it, or you have it not. Macaulay has a note on the circumstantial in writing, which may help to put young writers on the track. He contrasts the 'vague idea of vast bulk' which is all that Milton gives us of the

appearance of Satan, with Dante's description of the gigantic spectre of Nimrod, 'which', says Dante, 'was so tall that three tall Germans would in vain have attempted to reach to his hair'. It is true that the massive imagery of Milton partakes in its very vagueness of the terror of the unknown. But children must be asked to keep both feet on the ground, even in their imaginative flights. And that this may be done, it is necessary that imaginative writing should be properly prepared for, and further, that the child should try and see what he writes, and refer his descriptions to the touchstone of real things. Such exercises as a dream, an original toy, the sea-serpent, give room for imaginative work, while still keeping in touch with reality; and in spite of the pessimistic view expressed in *Peter Pan*, children are still sufficiently excited by the possibility of fairies to write with interest on 'Fairyland'.

It must not be thought that the book has been lost sight of all this while. At no time can it be of more real help than when the child is set a piece of difficult writing—such as description undoubtedly is. Either the exercise may be called for first, and the model passage read afterwards, or the order can be reversed. Both methods have advantages, but if the model passage is read first opportunity is given to notice some of the writing virtues of the author before the class attempt to handle a similar theme. Such writing as Cobbett's description of the wooded country round Battle or almost any page in *Rural Rides* can be used as a model for descriptive writing on the child's own district. Scott's description in *The Antiquary* of sunset in the storm, or the storm at Yarmouth in *David Copperfield* are excellent passages for reading either before or after a writing exercise; and perhaps most valuable of all, the wonderful imaginative passage in *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii, chap. 11, which is a supreme model for those who would describe anything.

Description is the half and perhaps the larger half of narrative, but there are other things. Charles Reade, a master in this kind, says that 'Suspense is the soul of narrative'. He is not thinking of the mechanical use of this device beloved of the feuilleton writer who half murders a man at the end of one instalment and recovers him as good

as new at the beginning of the next, but rather of the figure of speech commonly called Climax, whereby matter is worked up with increasing interest to an inevitable *dénouement*. There is also Surprise, so effectively employed in Frank Stockton's well-known story of *The Tiger or the Lady*, and in O. Henry's stories, where indeed it becomes a mannerism. It is not possible within the limits of a single chapter to do more than mention these devices.

Of recent years an increasing use has been made of pictures in the composition period, and so much has been written on the subject that it may be treated here quite briefly. The picture selected should be big enough to fill the eye, and colour, though not essential, is of undoubted help. Picture postcards are not really large enough, and if the poverty of the school in pictures leads to their being used, they should be handed round for private inspection. Reprints of famous pictures are to be found in the newer literary readers, and the illustrated catalogues of the Medici prints, though small, are valuable. The picture, both in design and execution, should be worth writing about. If a reproduction of Hogarth can be shown, passages from Hazlitt and Lamb on Hogarth might be read to senior children, to show how picture description has been done by master hands. Genre pictures such as those of Wilkie, Morland, and the Dutch school, make good descriptive exercises. They are full of detail, and make a homely, yet vivid appeal. There is no need to confine the picture description to thrilling scenes. Such a picture as Constable's Corn-field, or the months of Pol of Limburg can be made just as interesting to look at, as the two-penny coloured deeds of daring which are thought to be the limit of the child's interest. One kind of picture should never be used, that is the kind which purports to illustrate the poet. The poet makes his own pictures, which is quite a sufficient reason. There are several ways of varying the presentation of the picture exercise. One member can be asked to describe the picture in words (it will of course not be seen by the rest of the class), the description can be written after the speech, and the picture produced for comparison, when the extract is finished. Pictures without colour can have the colours filled in during the writing, and similarly, coloured

pictures can be described with reference to shape only. An interesting companion exercise to picture description is to ask the child to think of some scene or incident which would make a good picture, and then write a description. This exercise is peculiarly valuable, because it affords practice in keeping an eye on the object, even when the object is not present, which is the secret of successful descriptive writing.

Among composition exercises which derive from reading and which are intended to test assimilation, is the Paraphrase. All recent writers on English composition have united to discredit the Paraphrase. It is true that those who set the Paraphrase old style can have no conception of literature in its most important aspect—Form. It is also true that a perfectly reasonable idea prompted the Paraphrase. It was set in order to discover how much of the author's thought the reader had made his own. Even in this capacity it was far from satisfactory, for it is one thing to assimilate a writer's thought and quite another to show written proof that you have done so. Those who are still faithful to the paraphrase old style may find food for thought in contrasting the two following paraphrases of Psalm 136. The first is by Tate and Brady, and the second is by a poet. The original prose version runs :

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious · and his mercy endureth for ever

Who only doeth great wonders · for his mercy endureth for ever

Who by his excellent wisdom made the heavens : for his mercy endureth for ever.

The sun to rule the day : for his mercy endureth for ever.

The moon and the stars to govern the night : for his mercy endureth for ever.

#### TATE AND BRADY

To God, the mighty Lord,  
Your joyful thanks repeat ;  
To him due praise afford,  
As good as he is great  
For God does prove  
Our constant friend ;  
His boundless love  
Shall never end.

#### MILTON

Let us with a gladsom mind  
Praise the Lord, for he is kind,  
For his mercies ay endure,  
Ever faithfull, ever sure.  
  
That with his miracles doth make  
Amazèd Heav'n and earth to shake,  
For, &c.

TATE AND BRADY (*contd*)

By his Almighty hand  
 Amazing works are  
 wrought ;

The heavens by his command  
 Were to perfection brought  
 For God, &c

Through heav'n he did dis-  
 play

His num'rous hosts of light,  
 The sun to rule by day,

The moon and stars by  
 night

For God, &c.

MILTON (*contd*)

That by his wisdom did create  
 The painted Heaven so full of state  
 For, &c

And caus'd the golden-tressèd Sun  
 All the day long his cours to run.  
 For, &c.

The hornèd Moon to shine by night  
 Amongst her spangled sisters bright  
 For, &c.

One need not be an acute critic to decide which is the better performance, although Mark Pattison is very severe on Milton's youthful exercise. The truth is, and the extracts prove it, that the only way of paraphrasing literature is to make literature of the paraphrase. But where the form is not fine, no harm may be done through a Paraphrase. Or a paraphrase may even be set on what is undoubtedly literature, provided the exercise is not set as a direct paraphrase but glances from the original at a tangent.

And where, in the opinion of the teacher, the manner is so very definitely poor, that it cries aloud for mending, a direct paraphrase may be set with a clear conscience. Though the paraphrase old style is indefensible, yet the reason which called it into being still remains. Porson thoroughly detested Gibbon's style, and declared that there could not be a better exercise for a school-boy than to turn a page of the *Decline and Fall* into English. Indeed it would be an admirable exercise provided that the school-boy was equal to it. Such a passage as the following would prove his undoing :

'A session of eight days produced some useful or edifying canons for the reformation of manners ; a severe censure was pronounced against the license of private war, the truce of God was confirmed, a suspension of hostilities during four days of the week ; women and priests were placed under the safeguard of the church, and a protection of three years was extended to husbandmen and merchants, the defenceless victims of military rapine.'

But there is much less difficult prose than Gibbon's which might be of service. The caricatures in Dickens for example, and especially Mr. Micawber's letters, might very well be turned into English. It is a difficult and perhaps a sacrilegious exercise.

MY DEAR SIR,

Circumstances beyond my individual control have, for a considerable lapse of time, affected a severance of that intimacy which, in the limited opportunities conceded to me in the midst of my professional duties, of contemplating the scenes and events of the past, tinged by the prismatic hues of memory, has ever afforded me, as it ever must continue to afford, gratifying emotions of no common description. This fact, my dear Sir, combined with the distinguished elevation to which your talents have raised you, deters me from presuming to aspire to the liberty of addressing the companion of my youth by the familiar appellation of Copperfield!

I confine myself to throwing out the observation, that, at the hour and place I have indicated, may be found such ruined vestiges as yet

Remain

Of

A

Fallen Tower,

WILKINS MICAWBER

Garrulous prose is very suitable. Children might be set to cut down such a passage as the following:

'I declare I cannot recollect what I was talking of—Oh! my mother's spectacles. So very obliging of Mr. Frank Churchill! "Oh!" said he, "I do think I can fasten the rivet; I like a job of this kind excessively." Which, you know, showed him to be so very—Indeed I must say that, much as I had heard of him before and much as I had expected, he very far exceeds anything—I do congratulate you, Mrs. Weston, most warmly. He seems everything the fondest parent could—"Oh!" said he, "I can fasten the rivet, I like a job of that sort excessively." I never shall forget his manner. And when I brought out the baked apples from the closet, and hoped our friends would be so very obliging as to take some, "Oh!" said he directly, "there is nothing in the way of fruit so good." That, you know, was so very—'

Then there is the frankly horrible, such as this from a novel by a clergyman's wife:

'I have never described it (a church) but I think I ought, as some day, who knows, when the Dyllingtons become extinct, as, according to an old prophecy, we shall, and these lands pass into the hands of others, and Knighton Gorges is perhaps a ruin or pulled down, as,



according to another strange clause in the title-deeds, it must be if no heir in the direct line be born to hold it, and our beautiful chapel dedicated to "Our Lady", become perhaps a granary or a barn, where the peaceful cow may munch its clover grass, and the pig grunt strangely to its mate, the sow, it would be pleasant to know that posterity can come and gaze, and wonder, and wondering, find, perhaps, a strange lesson which will sink into the soul'

Although it is a thankless task, yet for the sake of the good practice the class might be set to mend the manner while preserving the matter. Or a piece of prose argument can be used, and the class instructed to write the opposite view. This is an advanced exercise, but an excellent test for absorption. Leigh Hunt's Essay on 'Getting up on Cold Mornings' for example might be read, and then reversed in thought. Very interesting exercises both in prose and verse, may be devised by filling in the blanks in writing.

There is a blank in thought between these two stanzas of Arnold's poem, 'The Neckan'

'I am no knight,' he answer'd,  
 'From the sea waves I come'—  
 The knights drew sword, the ladies screamed,  
 The surpliced priest stood dumb

He sings how from the chapel  
 He vanished with his bride,  
 And bore her down to the sea halls,  
 Beneath the salt sea tide

Children may be set to fill in such gaps between the action, either in prose or verse. This exercise does something more than merely discover whether the thought of the author has been mastered. It is a searching test for the appreciation of style and atmosphere. And children can be set to paraphrase their own work, by changing the form. Verse can be turned into prose, prose into verse, telegrams into letters.

#### THE WRITING OF LETTERS

Letters are no new exercises in the schools. In the charming letter written by Sir Henry Sidney to his son Philip, then at Shrewsbury School, mention is made of two letters written by 'little Philip', one in Latin, the other in French, 'which' (says Sir Henry) 'I take in good part and

will you to exercise that practice of learning often' Writing a century later, John Locke in the *Essay on Education* commends the letter-writing exercise to all school-masters, and in words which could hardly be bettered, goes on to discuss the importance both in business and social affairs of the letter-writing art.

'When they understand how to write English with due connexion, propriety, and order, and are pretty well masters of a tolerable narrative style, they may be advanced to writing of letters; wherein they should not be put upon any strains of wit or compliment, but taught to express their own plain easy sense without any incoherence, confusion or roughness. . . . The writing of letters has so much to do in all the occurrences of human life, that no gentleman can avoid showing himself in this kind of writing. occasion will daily force him to make use of his pen, which, besides the consequences that, in his own affairs, his well- or ill-managing of it often draws after it, always lays him open to a severer examination of his breeding, sense, and abilities than oral discourses, whose transient faults, dying for the most part with the sound that gives them life, and so not subject to a strict review, more easily escape observation and censure.'

It is a matter for regret that Locke did not specify his method of teaching children to write without 'incoherence, confusion or roughness', but no fault can be found with his general argument.

It is important at the outset to try and secure an atmosphere of reality for the letter-writing exercise, or at least not to put too great a strain upon the credulity of the child. It is not to be expected that the child will write with gusto if he is asked to give his views on the physical geography of Patagonia in the form of a letter to his teacher. Nor can he be expected to relish exchanging letters with a class-mate dealing with some affair of school life, when the more natural channel of communication is obviously speech. His letters must counterfeit the real thing rather more closely. The theme of the letter exercise is all important. One way of securing the air of reality is to answer an advertisement, which he can cut out of the family newspaper and have before him as he writes. Or he can be set to answer an actual letter which the teacher reads to him,

such a letter for example as the Earl of Chesterfield wrote to his son Philip.

Dublin Castle, 29 Nov 1745

DEAR BOY,

I have received your last Saturday's performance, with which I am very well satisfied. Now that the Christmas breaking-up draws near, I have ordered Mr Desnoyers to go to you, during that time to teach you to dance. I desire that you will particularly attend to the graceful motion of your arms; which with the manner of putting on your hat, and giving your hand, is all that a gentleman need attend to. . . . And although I would not have you a dancer, yet when you do dance, I would have you dance well, as I would have you do everything you do, well. There is no one thing so trifling, but which (if it is to be done at all) ought to be done well, and I have often told you that I even wish you played at pitch, and cricket, better than any boy at Westminster.

Or he can join in any controversy that happens to be raging in the local press over the form of the War-memorial, or of the dreadful state of the roads, or the iniquity of strikes.

The use of the letters of literature should never be omitted. There is no collection that I know of especially intended for children's reading, but several of the *Selected English Letters* (World's Classics) and more of *Four Centuries of English Letters* (Harper) are suitable. From these he will be able to see the correct use of formulae, he will be able to note (it should be emphasized very strongly) the ordering of the matters, and he may be able to perceive, if faintly, the grace and urbanity of the true letter-writer. He should be warned against the business letter as it is found in business correspondence manuals.

Dothemall Lane,  
Bradford.

Messrs. Prosperteer & Co.  
DEAR SIR,

Re yours of the 16th inst. We beg to announce that we have forwarded same, per goods train, and expect you will receive such in the course of a few days. Hoping for a continuance of your esteemed favour.

We are,  
Faithfully yours,  
MESSRS PROSPERTEER & Co.  
per A. B.

This sort of thing is too bad to be burned by the public

hangman, but that does not prevent it finding its way into classes in commercial correspondence.

An excellent exercise in compression is to recast (where the matter is suitable) a letter as a telegram. Another interesting and valuable exercise is to ask for such a letter as might be written by an old villager to his son in the Army. It would, of course, be written in dialect with phonetic spelling to taste, and in addition to a general incoherence of matter and manner, it would exhibit such time-honoured formula as 'I hope you are quite well as it leaves me at present' and 'This is all I have to say this time, so I must conclude with fondest love'. Possibly the teacher, in order to get quite what he wants would have to write the letter himself. The same letter should then be re-written in a conventional form, or a reply undertaken from the old man's son, who would naturally be a 'good scollard'. This exercise can be made to serve for a text on such important matters as coherence and formulae, but although correct formulae are of obvious importance, and it is possibly safer with children to insist on the observance of the writing convention, yet they might be shown some of the charming variations of such a letter-writer as Dorothy Osborne.

*There remains the vexed question of marking.* Correction may be, and usually is, undertaken entirely by the teacher. An ideal correction is team work by the teacher, the writer, and the child's class-mates. Something has already been said of self-correction during the writing of the exercise. There is the further self-correction after the exercise has been completed—that careful and conscientious revision of writing which Ben Jonson commended 'For all that we invent doth please us in conception of birth, else we would never set it down. But the safest thing is to return to our judgements, and handle over again those things the easiness of which might make them justly suspected. So did the best writers.'

This is an ideal to set before the young. Unfortunately their judgement has not a sufficiently keen edge to make the pruning entirely thorough, and even if it were, the young are, as before remarked, averse from reading over their own work with the object of removing blemishes. The teacher must make good the deficiencies in self-correction. The old style of correcting composition exercises was a dreadful

tax on the time and energy of the teacher. It is to be feared that the results rarely justified the use of so much energy and good red ink. There is no branch of school work in which it is more important to ask and find an answer to the question 'What is all this doing for the child?' If the teacher insists on both marking the exercise and correcting the mistakes, then an unsatisfactory answer must be given to the above question. Mistakes should be indicated by a system of marking signs and the onus of correction thrown on the proper shoulders. But if the teacher's work in correction, new style, is lighter in one way it is heavier in another, for it demands the exercise of thought and judgement. The ordinary minutiae of spelling and grammar correction are of less importance than the correction of balance, of melody, of order. Here again a system of marking signs should be adopted, as a matter of agreement between teacher and class. Attention, for example, would be called to sentences consisting of bundles of facts tied loosely together with a string of connectives. A gritty sediment of small words or an indigestible glut of large words, would be condemned for debasing the sound. Jingles and clashes would not be passed for the same reason. Breaches of paragraph laws, digressions, inconsistencies would all come under the teacher's blue pencil. The aim of the exercise will often determine the nature of the marking. In correcting an exercise definitely calling for melodious writing, for example, good sound would receive the first consideration and spelling corrections—if it is not heresy to say so—might be omitted altogether. The correction of such matters as wrong concords—where they are not too gross in character—might well be done orally.

I submit as an example of marking—new style—an original ballad with the teacher's corrections and criticism

#### BALLAD OF BROWN OAKS

I

O come, my child, the night is cool,  
 The birds are singing all,  
 And let us tread the moss-grown path,      *Spelling?*  
 Beneath yon aged wall.

2

Sweet is the carol of the lark,  
And soft the blackbirds sing,  
And echoing every melody,  
The woods with music ring

3

The towering cloudbanks, in the sky,  
Are tipped with flaming gold,  
And shepherds tend their bleating flocks,  
Within the shaded fold

*This is a useful sunset, but Coleridge wrote—  
The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,  
At one stride comes the dark*

4

And ye, shall pluck the daisy white,      *Stopping*  
That grows the green sward over,  
Aye! pluck each blossom that thou wilt,  
But let alone the clover

5

O grandsire, what is ailing thee?  
The humming bee doth hover,  
Around each pretty daisy white,  
But lighteth on the clover

*A bad rhyme here, but there are many worse in the Ballads.*

6

And though it is a humble flower,  
And smells not like the rose,  
To me 'tis fair[er] grandpapa  
Than any flower that grows

7

Come sit the[e] down along with me,  
A tale to thee I'll tell,  
The clover was the little flower,      ●  
That Mary loved so well.

*Reverse stopping  
and in Stanza 6*

8

O Mary's eyes were gold and brown,  
Her voice was soft and low,  
And Mary was the pretty lass  
I loved, long years ago.

*See what Shakespeare  
says about Cordelia  
in 'Lear'.*

9

She was a milkmaid young and fair,  
Just twenty years and one,  
And I, a humble farmer's lad,  
A-ploughing in the sun.

10

But after seven long years had sped,  
The sweetest of my life,  
Time saw me with my own green farm  
And Mary was my wife

11

And every night we used to walk,  
Still like young, lover folks,  
Into the hushed woods close by,  
The woodland of Brown Oaks.

*hushed—for the metre.*

12

Brown Oaks ! Brown Oaks ! the fretful wind  
Breaths in my listening ear,  
Brown Oaks ! Brown Oaks ! the peewit cries,  
O Mary ! Mary ! dear [*Mary dear* !]

*Spelling**Stopping.*

13

He stretches out his wrinkled hands,  
And calls so wearily,  
None hear him, but the little lad,  
And the flowers dance cheerily.

*More feminine rhymes as  
here would sweeten the  
melody Variation in  
rhythm is effective*

14

Brown Oaks ! Brown Oaks ! O pretty woods,  
Shall I again thee see ?  
And pluck the flowers, as oft I did,  
When Mary was with me

*Awkward inversion this*

15

For one night as I walked along,  
(My Mary was with me,)  
A man came stealing through the woods,  
' G[e]o o'er that maid to me '

*(Brackets added)**(Quotation marks added)*

16

' G[e]o o'er that maid to me ' said he,  
And in his fiery eyes,  
There gleamed the light of madness, Ah !  
I still can hear his cries

17

' And who be ye, thou brazen loon ?  
And what might be your game ? '  
' Oh ! I do toil for Lord St. John's,  
The keeper of his game.

*Grammar.*

18

But gie ye o'er yon brown-eyed maid, *This is a very mixed dialect*  
 Or I will ha' thy life,  
 For now I live in these brown woods  
 And she shall be my wife '

19

Before I er'e could [*say*] one word,  
 Of courage or of fright,  
 A shot rang through those peaceful woods,  
 And all was dark as night

*Where is the motive for this crime ? It seems so uncalled for.*

20

And all was dark as night to me, *Neat repetition*  
 Until a week had sped,  
 But when I woke from that dark sleep,  
 My Mary dear was dead

21

He shakes his hoary whitened head, *You do not want both*  
 A tear drops from his eye, *'hoary' and 'whitened'*  
 ' And I remembered then ' said he, *Look up 'hoary' in*  
 ' His words, the shot, her cry ' *dictionary.*

22

I heard her pitious fluttering cry, *Spelling'*  
 As 'neath the oaks she fell,  
 The shot the madman then had fired,  
 Had done its work full well

*'Fluttering' cry. Good !*

23

And when once more I weakly walked,  
 The pretty churchyard over,  
 Friends led me to a green green grave,  
 'Twas covered o'er with clover.

24

So thou may'st pluck thy daisy white,  
 That grows the green sward over,  
 But let alone that sainted flower, *'Sainted' is an epithet transferred*  
 Aye ! let alone the clover. *from Mary, I suppose. But it is good.*

25

Brown Oaks ! Brown Oaks !  
 O pretty woods, shall I again thee see ?  
 We'll tell of thee when I'm in heav'n  
 And Mary is with me.

*Too many 'ees' in this stanza.*  
*It makes the melody thm. Re-*  
*mind me to discuss 'trans-*  
*ferred epithet' and 'vowel*  
*variety'.*



26

Brown Oaks ! Brown Oaks ! the frettful wind  
Breaths in my listening ear,  
Brown Oaks ! Brown Oaks ! the peewit cries,  
O Mary Mary dear.

*Bad stopping here*

*This is a good imitation It has some of the spirit of the ballad, and you have availed yourself, not unskilfully, of repetition But you tend to be long-winded—of course the ballad writers often are. But you should read the ballad called 'Helen of Kirconnell', which is your story told in half the space I suspect the murder comes from the 'pictures'*

1

Brown Oaks, Brown Oaks, the blackbird flutes,  
Beneath the willow trees,  
Brown Oaks, Brown Oaks, O pretty woods,  
Whispers the July breeze

2

And she shall be my wife, said he,  
As long ago I vowed,  
Before I fled from these fair woods,  
With shame and sorrow bowed.

Ivy Newman, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ 

*N B —The first stanza above is an alternative refrain. The second stanza was added to meet the criticism that the crime was too unprovoked It is intended to fit between Stanzas 18 and 19 The marking is purposely set out in full A set of marking signs would save time*

## CHAPTER VII

### ON DICTATION AND ON LEARNING BY HEART

Quick! thy tablets Memory!

DICTATION has fallen on evil days. In many schools it is under a cloud, in more it has suffered total eclipse. Where it is in use, the impossible is often expected from it, while its possibilities are either overlooked or but imperfectly realized. Is it not time to restore to the teacher a valuable tool now rusted through inaction, or blunted by misuse?

The old-style Dictation Lesson had, as its most important and often its sole aim, the acquirement of spelling. To this end it was very carefully and methodically organized. The words, or such of them as were likely to bring the child to a pause, were dislodged from the extract and exhibited on the blackboard. Then followed a Spelling drill either by individuals or more frequently in chorus. The sound conveyed a plausible suggestion of industry to the teacher; and striking not unpleasantly on the ear of the passer-by, betrayed to him, if he had not already recognized it by its grim and prison-like exterior, the whereabouts of the 'noisy mansion'. And so

The noises intermixed which thence resound  
Do learning's little tenement betray,

which is how it sounded to Shenstone

Immediately the voice of the teacher, keyed up for the occasion, was to be heard dissecting the 'piece', often indeed dissecting a harmless word—'hard-ly': 'Constant-i-no-ple'. The extracts were not chosen for their value as literature; usually very dull stuff from the school reader served, and it was rendered even more deadly (if that were possible) by the positively inhuman stressing and phrasing employed in the interest of the spelling. Occasionally, very ingenious practitioners of the art would

concoct freak passages compounded of rare or difficult words, or of previous errors, for the more effectual undoing of youth.

In time it became clear that Dictation was not a royal road to spelling, although it is true that a simple faith in this article of belief is still held by a devoted few. The process of disillusion was hastened by the discovery that the spelling of children who had been reared on Dictation was not appreciably better than that of those unfortunates to whom the privilege was denied. It became plain

(1) That spelling was a matter for the eye, rather than for the ear, and that extensive reading was far more likely to benefit spelling, than the sounding of letters and the saying of words,

(2) That the sound of a word does not of necessity recall its written form.

So Dictation was ousted from its place on the Time-table, and spelling rules held the ground.

It did not become clear

1. That Dictation may be made a valuable mental training in habits of concentration, accuracy, and attention;

2 That Dictation may become a powerful auxiliary to the Appreciation lesson,

3 That neither of these possibilities is likely to be attained if the old methods of 'giving out' are persisted in.

It is quite well understood that the power of attention in young children is fitful and short-lived. When the mind is engaged by interest (it may be self-interest, such as the fear of punishment or the desire for praise) the term of attention is lengthened; but it is probable that even where interest sustains the attention, assimilation flags and may cease altogether before the attention finally seeks a fresh object. But although this instability of attention is characteristic of the young, it is the business of Education to contrive exercises designed to strengthen attention and to enable the mind to resist the lure of counter attractions. It has been well said that one of the aims of Education is to enable us to do what we don't want to do, at a time when we least want to do it. The Will must be trained to focus Attention when it runs contrary to inclination; for although we try nowadays to contrive that interest and inclination shall march together, we cannot imagine that they are always in step, or even indeed, that they consis-

tently take the same road. Dictation is an admirable mental discipline. Its nature is such as to call for continuous and not spasmodic attention; the stimulus to attention is the natural—and therefore valuable—stimulus of the human voice; and lastly, inattention is automatically punished.

But Dictation must be given its chance, and this means that the dictated periods must be sufficiently long to provide a real test for memory and concentration. The work should begin quite early in the school, and need not wholly confine itself to writing. The teacher may say,

John Smith, bring me your reading book and your pen, and put your plasticine box on the cupboard.' And in the Shopping Game during Arithmetic, 'Mary Brown, I want you to ask for five penny candles and a fourpenny bar of soap, and inquire if Mr. Brown has any fresh eggs to-day.' Telephone messages may be sent through an imaginary telephone by the teacher (shopping requirements, or particulars of an accident, or an appointment made), the child being required to reproduce the contents of such messages to a third person with substantial accuracy. Or messages dictated by the teacher or by a child may be delivered by one child to another; or the teacher may read out a sentence from a reading book and require it to be repeated verbatim. This last is a useful exercise because the book provides a check on accuracy. When the written work begins the teacher should realize and confide in the extraordinary tenacity of the verbal memory in children, and not deal out the work in snippets. The truth is, that in many things we require the impossible from children, while in others we are content with a needlessly low standard. It is worth while making some such experiment as the following.

Let a short and simple stanza such as

See the swan go  
In his jacket of snow,  
An island of white  
In a lake of delight.

be read twice clearly and distinctly but with no unnatural slowness. Preface the repetition by the warning that any child will be expected to repeat it to the teacher after the

last hearing. Normal children of eight or nine will do this very readily. Why then limit their dictation to two or three words at a time?

The bugbear of spelling must not be allowed to circumscribe either the length of the dictated period or the choice of matter. Dictation does not, and cannot teach, and never has taught spelling. Spelling is 'caught', rather than 'taught'. There is no conceivable reason (except tradition) why dictionaries should not be as freely used during the dictation lesson as they are in the composition lesson. If practical considerations make the use of a dictionary inconvenient, the teacher may write up the difficult words before dictation begins, and leave them on the blackboard for reference. On no account should the class be instructed to leave blanks for the words. Suppose that the piece selected is the nymph's song to Hylas in the *Life and Death of Jason*.

A sweet song sung not yet to any man.

The teacher will first read the poem through as a whole, having previously written up the difficult words. Extra words may be suggested by the class at the close of the reading and added at the teacher's discretion. Then he will make a rapid calculation as to what is a suitable unit of length for this particular class. He will remember that metrical form, and in particular the chiming of rhyme, is a strong aid to memory. He will probably decide on the couplet and begin

I know a little garden close  
 Set thick with lily and red rose,      [Pause]  
 Where I would wander if I might  
 From dewy morn to dewy night      [Pause]

Later on he may increase the number of his repetitions to two or three, and lengthen the dictated period:

And in the place two fair streams are,  
 Drawn from the purple hills afar,  
 Drawn down into the restless sea;  
 The hills whose flowers ne'er fed the bee.      [Pause]

or even as far as the next couplet.

Finally, the poet's name will be entered at the foot of the extract, and one or two children called upon to read their work aloud. It is an interesting practice to direct

the class to leave a blank line at the beginning of the extract and after the last reading is over to suggest that an appropriate title should be filled in for the heading. The invention of a good title is a test for appreciation. Often a quotation will serve. 'Quotation, sir,' said Johnson, 'is a good thing. There is a community of mind in it.' Apt quotations make excellent titles and there is a pleasant literary flavour about them which may refresh the teacher's spirit when he is suffering from the malaise that comes from marking.

The procedure with prose is substantially the same, but it will be found that prose is less easily held in the memory than verse. The preliminary reading will present the extract as an organic whole. Possibly some few words of introduction will be necessary, but this will depend upon the piece chosen. The choice of good extracts for dictation requires skill and forethought. An extract should present a clear-cut picture or a well-drawn impression, and should not be too weighty in matter. If the matter is difficult the child will merely reproduce the letter of the passage. Our aim is to get him to secure some record of a moment of art, and to this end, although we do not expect or even hope that the full significance of what we read will take hold of the child, yet it is essential that he should perceive at least the general drift of ideas. For this reason too a minimum of explanation is allowable. Prose for dictation is much more difficult to choose than poetry. A book of carefully chosen extracts for Dictation would be of considerable use in the class-room.

In giving out prose an attempt should be made to preserve as far as possible the outlines of rhythm and structure, in order that a succession of good forms may be presented to the ear. If this unduly extends the dictated period, the unit of thought or rhythm should be dictated as a whole and then sub-divided.

I have suggested that Dictation may be of real help to appreciation. In the first place it enables the teacher to widen the literary circle for the child. A great deal of ground, which would otherwise lie fallow, may be cultivated in the Dictation period. He may be introduced to authors who are not represented in his prose and poetry anthologies, and his knowledge of those that are, may be greatly

extended. A written record of a year's work in Dictation, if the extracts have been judiciously chosen, ought to make a passable anthology of Prose and Verse. It will add unity to the record if it is kept in a separate book and not interspersed among the Composition Exercises. No inferior work should ever be presented, and it is almost safe to say that school text-books in history and geography should never be used.

In the second place Dictation presents literature as the spoken word, and in the Chapter on Reading I have tried to show the incredible importance of the appeal to the ear. Moreover, there is little doubt that the writing following hard on the reading, strengthens the first impression. Dictation gives too an opportunity of putting an edge on some point which has been discussed in a recent appreciation lesson. It may happen that the teacher has been dealing with the correspondence between sound and sense. The Dictation Period gives a chance to add to the illustrations already given, and preserves some written record of the work.

And lastly, if poetry has been drawn on, any spare time at the end of the lesson may be profitably filled up by calling on the class to improvise an extra stanza which may be written underneath, if it is not too great an outrage on the original.

### LEARNING BY HEART

Teachers of English are agreed that learning by heart is of supreme importance. Montaigne has said that to know by heart is not to know, but of poetry the exact opposite is the truth. A man may know the drift of a poem, he may feel as it floats vaguely through his mind, some consciousness of its spirit and atmosphere, even of its music and rhythm; he will not know it wholly until he has mastered the form. And the garnering of the incorruptible treasures of poetry should begin early, for poetry ripens with the passing of time; as with a violin age enriches the melody, and what may sound but a pleasant prelude in the ears of youth, becomes attuned to an incomparable music in the hearts of old men.

It is when we consider what we may call the ethics of learning by heart that difficulties arise. There is the danger that learning by heart may become a dull drudgery. And

if it does become task work, will not the mind react when the artificial stimulus of authority is removed, and refuse a like food in the future? There is a general agreement that the natural and beautiful way of learning by heart is for the child to learn only what he wants to learn. But here the examiner will always prove too strong for the idealist. Samuel Butler, who appears to have disliked examiners, would have all education wait upon desire, in which event no doubt the cynic among us would not fail to observe that our occupation would be wholly gone. Some defence of compulsory learning can be made. Youth is the seedtime of habit. It is the time when learning by heart is easiest and least irksome. But if learning by heart is undertaken for no other reason than because it is demanded by authority there is no hope for the teacher or the child.

We do not learn poetry to satisfy the examiners, but to satisfy a need in human nature. This need is the instinct for beauty. It is an instinct which is atrophied in the adult more often than not, and stirs in the child somewhat blindly and confusedly. But those who have faith in children know that it is always there; and even in the Philistine whose natural instincts have been corrupted by conventional education, or who has mutilated himself as an offering to the high gods of Business, the craving for Beauty often manifests itself in strange and pathetic fashion. That the natural love of beauty does not invariably urge the child to possess himself of verse is due to the fact that the beauty of verse is recondite, and to a great extent frozen in the cold print. It has not the obvious appeal of the beauty of flowers, for instance; and we cannot be surprised that children do not appear over anxious to possess themselves of a beauty of which they are largely unaware. We must look to the Appreciation lesson to supply stimulus for the learning by heart.

There is one other reason why children should get good prose and verse by heart. Good literature is a touchstone for taste. Those who surround themselves with good books have their standards of excellence within reach. The mere presence on the shelves of Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, Jane Austen exhales an atmosphere which is too rarefied for the latest 'best seller'. But many of our children come from bookless homes and it is a simple necessity that



they should carry their standards of excellence with them. It is true that the mere possession of touchstones, if they are never used, will not set the child very far forward on the road to self-culture. But for the sake of the few who will consciously refer to the masters both old and new as well as for the benefit of the many who may be sub-consciously influenced, every effort must be made to store the memory.

Two questions remain to be answered. What should be committed to memory, and how is it best done? Obviously the child must be allowed a choice, even if in the result the teacher's taste is vexed. Tom Moore is well represented in the children's anthology with which I am most acquainted, and attracted possibly by the rather facile verse, possibly by a certain convenient brevity in comparison with the other extracts, children will frequently offer the Irish melodies. It would be injudicious with junior children to argue the choice.

In addition to the poems (usually short) which individual children choose for themselves, a poem of some length might be got by heart by the class. Such a poem quite apart from its intrinsic value, would be very useful as a storehouse on which the teacher could draw for illustration of points raised in the appreciation lesson, with the assurance that they would be familiar to the whole class. And this suggests a further field. Apt extracts used by the teacher in the Appreciation lesson might very profitably be got by heart. Such a series of extended quotations would help to fix in the mind the nature and use of the special excellence or artifice which they illustrated. To commit, for example, the similes in 'The Goblin Market' to heart, would be a much more sensible proceeding than 'getting up' a barren definition of a simile.

Passages used in the Dictation lessons may be preserved in the memory with a very little effort, and particularly if they are attempted immediately after the Dictation period. If the longer poem referred to above is in narrative form, it should be very carefully chosen. There is narrative poetry which attains to a high order of excellence, yet most narrative verse is undoubtedly second rate. The best informed criticism finds much more of the essential stuff of poetry in the four short stanzas of 'Proud Maisie' than in the six cantos of *Rokeby*. There is one more field which

may (or may not) be harvested. It is the child's own verse. Verse that is fashioned in the head, away from pen and paper—a recreation which Stevenson enjoins on the solitary walker—takes a rare hold of the memory. But the written work is ephemeral. Some, no doubt, would regard this as providential.

There remains the question of method. When the poem has been decided on, it should be read as a whole by the teacher to the child, then by the child to the teacher. This is important. If a child commences his learning without first hearing and attempting a spoken rendering he may commit mis-pronunciations to memory, and he will have no standard for endeavour. This is not to say that the child is to model his rendering on the teacher's model, line by line, and word for word. It is a precaution only. Even when all possible precautions, short of a word-to-word imitation are taken, mistakes occur. The natural and best way of learning verse is not through a silent reading. If learning aloud interferes with other classes (it is thought by some teachers to be subversive of discipline), why not send a poetry section into the play-ground and let them chant it to their heart's content and their soul's health. No doubt the casual visitor would be surprised and possibly disturbed in mind to hear snatches of poetry borne on the wind instead of the melodious 'One Two! One Two!' of the physical drill period; and if the play-ground was open to the public eye, no doubt the master would get the reputation of being eccentric—which would never do. But where privacy can be secured open-air recitation might be tried.

The importance of marking the rhythmical return and sounding the rhyme has been dealt with in the chapter on reading. A few words may be added here. Before he begins his learning the child should be instructed to work out the rhyme plan, so that he may know when to expect the rhyme, and take full advantage of the suggestion which rhyme offers to the memory. Nothing should be said about dropping the voice at full stops or at the end of lines, but a great deal should be said about the importance of looking for pictures in the verse. If he is taught to picture out (it is taken for granted the verse provided for his choice is largely pictorial) he will be the more likely to realize the


sense, than if he is set to get up the meaning of single words. The boy who recited the verse in the *Ancient Mariner* so—

All in a hot and copper sky  
The bloody sun, at noon,  
Right up above the mast did stand,  
So did the bloody moon

had not made the pictures, or he would never have made his delightful mistake.

A rhythmical rendering though rare is not impossible to children. I have found it a good plan, especially with children whose rhythmical sense is sluggish, to have the strong beats tapped out on the desk with a ruler, while the verse is being said—

My good blade carves the casques of men  
My tough lance thrusteth sure.

Many children—and these need the practice very badly—find it extremely difficult to keep the beat and the voice going simultaneously. Occasionally the whole class might keep a subdued time going to a solo recitation. Or when class recitation is decided on (its possibilities and justification have been dealt with earlier) a child may be instructed to keep the time for the whole class. Beating time is a prop for the weaker brethren. It need only be used when the rendering is particularly flat and unrhythmical, and it should be the exception and not the rule. Prose is harder to get into the memory than verse. The procedure is substantially the same, and the preliminary reading is quite as important as it is in poetry. Prose for learning by heart should be melodious and rhythmical. If the matter is fine as well as the manner of saying, then there is an added joy. But the main ground of selection should be of manner. If the passage is to be learned by the whole class, the free patterns of rhythm may well be exhibited on the blackboard either by barring | or in curves .

There are a few scattered observations to make in conclusion. The dreadful dramatic renderings still so common in schools should be made over once and for all to the amateur

actor and the Band of Hope reciter. The fine flower of the dramatic method is to be found in a little book called *Elocutionary Studies*, from which I will permit myself the luxury of quotation.

The author begins by saying that he has 'read, lectured, and written' on this particular study in a great many places, and talked with some thousands of people on the matter. In short, he knows—to quote his own elegant language—'how certain pieces are done'. This is how to 'do' a stanza of 'Young Lochinvar'

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up  
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup

'You may impart dramatic treatment. You may kiss the goblet; take it up; drink the wine, though the most rigid of blue Ribbonists, and cast away the cup. More sentimental tone and action will now be requisite.'

She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,  
With a smile on her lip, and a tear in her eye.

'Look down as you give the first words of these two lines, and then raise your face as you speak of the sigh. A nice smiling countenance should be displayed as you speak of the smile on her lip.'

But perhaps the most 'delightful treat' for the reader, if not for the audience, is to be found in 'Eugene Aram'.

I took the dreary body up  
And cast it in a stream—  
A sluggish water, black as ink,  
The depth was so extreme—  
My gentle boy, remember this  
Is nothing but a dream.

'After giving the last stanza with its command, pause still, as if listening to the voice from heaven, and then stooping down quickly as you speak the first line of this stanza take up the body in such a manner as shall indicate weight, and, by a strong effort, throw it on your right into the stream.' After which, one supposes, the reciter is so worked upon by Aram's remorse (which in the next stanza but one sets in, the author tells us, 'unmercifully') that he goes out and drowns himself in the canal.

It is not suggested that the dramatic method is always so precious as this. Such a talent for silliness is mercifully rare. But those who lean to dramatic renderings would do well to be quite sure where they are going. In striking contrast to the dramatic rendering, and certainly nearer to the ideal rendering, is the matter of Perrin's reading in Mr. Masefield's 'Captain Margaret'. 'Verse ought to be read in a monotone (says Captain Margaret), but there is a passionate monotone.' Alas, the 'passionate monotone' is beyond children.

When the poetry or prose comes to be heard, every effort must be made to secure a sympathetic atmosphere for the reciter. There is much to be said for the culture hour. (I am conscious that this is a rather highfalutin name, but a better does not suggest itself.) The culture hour is an hour set apart for entertainment. The programme might be drawn up by the debating committee. Reciters, raconteurs, singers, instrumentalists, possibly even dancers will give their services with the single and avowed aim of giving pleasure to their class-mates (and themselves). The items will be volunteered, and applause of the conventional kind should be permitted if it does not interfere with the work of neighbouring classes. It will be exuberant at first, but only so long as the novelty of clapping hands in the class-room, charms. The brutal truthfulness which distinguishes the relations of the young with each other will soon prevent the applause of mere politeness. It is scarcely wise to invite visitors. Strangers in the house either constrain the performers, or tempt them to show off. But if the entertainment hour is undertaken in the spirit of the old school concert, it were best left alone.

Lastly, two quite practicable reforms are long overdue. The teacher can hardly expect his class to value poetry sufficiently well if he does not match his precept by example. And is it not high time that the horrible word 'repetition', as applied to the learning of poetry, was given a Christian burial?

## CHAPTER VIII

### APPRECIATION

I love all beauteous things,  
I seek and adore them ,  
God hath no better praise,  
And man in his hasty days  
Is honoured for them

THOUGH the sun has long gone down on Ruskin's wrath it can hardly be said to have risen on his gospel. It is still true to say that the average man has no conception that Art is the stuff of which life is made. Now the aesthetic argument has engaged the minds of many thinkers from Plato to Benedetto Croce. The dual nature of the creative impulse which urges man to convert the useful into the beautiful, and in a kind of rhythmical reaction, to seek out the germ of utility in beauty, is an old and ever new inquiry. Such inquiry is not within the province of the schoolmaster, but he cannot escape being committed to the results which have been established. They are—speaking broadly and indeed roughly :

1. The sense of beauty inheres in man.
2. The neglect of the aesthetic sense does grave injury to the individual and through him to the state.
3. The growth of the sense of beauty is dependent on training.

There is a further conclusion which is the especial concern of this chapter—that Literature is a powerful stimulus to the aesthetic consciousness, and that it should be organized and taught to this end.

Human nature has never found entire satisfaction in the mere pursuit of a livelihood or the acquisition of material things. Primitive man as soon as he was fenced in with some small security from the attacks of animals, from the inclemency of the seasons, from the fear of famine, turned Decorator. His art found scope in the ornamentation of utensils and implements, in the ritual dance, and in the fashioning of his Lares and Penates. As he affected an increasing economy of the effort necessary to sustain life, he used the resulting increase of leisure for perfecting and

contemplating his art and giving it a more distinct intention ; and so music with poetry arose of the dance, while sculpture and painting developed out of decoration. It is true that at all times great masses of men have suffered labour so prolonged and exacting as to leave them little spiritual energy for creating beauty, and little leisure for contemplating beautiful things. It is also true that before the Industrial Revolution, the nature of man's work was rarely hostile to beauty, and the comparative absence of machinery fostered individuality, which is the soul of art, and saved labour from becoming stereotyped and mechanical. Further, there was, and especially as Morris shows, in the great flowering times of architecture, a widespread interest and pride in the growth of noble buildings which in itself was an education of the finest quality. So it was possible for the late Auguste Rodin to speak in a fine phrase of the 'whole human dream blossoming in the pediment of a temple'.

But since the age of Industrialism the conditions of labour have gone steadily against the spiritual, which is the artistic, instinct in man. There is little need to dwell on this point, but certain large tendencies stand out quite clearly. It is becoming plain that Industrialism, as we know it, carries inherent in itself the seeds of rebellion. Man is not machine made, and he will never submit permanently to conditions of life which rank him with the machine. We are now witnessing the beginning of what future historians will call The Age of Spiritual Revolt. The workers are disquieted in soul. Their aesthetic conscience has been killed, but the ghost refuses to be laid. They have been dead in the spirit for generations, but the fact, despite Tolstoy, Ruskin, and Morris, has been in the main concealed from them. In despair and ignorance, they turn for emotional stimulus to drink, to the Salvation Army, to gambling, to gladiatorial displays, to the picture palaces, to the shilling shocker, even to education.

And what has education to give them ? If it had always remained faithful to the noble ideal expressed in Plato's definition of its purpose, which is, he says 'to give to the body and the soul all the beauty and all the perfection of which they are capable', it would be easier to give a satisfactory answer. Even if education in England had been

influenced and guided by Schiller's saying 'All Art is dedicated to Joy', the answer might have been different. But the simple truth is that the ideals of the age of Industrialism, were and are only too faithfully reflected in the schools; and these ideals are of the earth, earthy. We still labour to teach our children meagre clerkly attainments in a world which is suffering from a surfeit of such attainments. They must still be taught to write legibly rather than beautifully; they must still be taught to indite—that is the expression—a business letter, they must spell conventionally; they must still be taught the mere mechanical business of reading; they must drill—nothing is said about the importance of moving the body beautifully, they must use tools to turn out stupid little banalities which nobody wants to look at twice. All these things have their relative unimportance; but when they pass for Education, to what a pass has Education come. And so we go on; taxing the educational mint, anise, and cummin, while the judgement of and the love for beauty are clean put out of mind. And if this is the creative side of the school work, the appreciative side is no worse, because it can scarcely be said to exist at all. The aesthetic output is almost wholly absent, because the aesthetic intake is scarcely ever present. The intention of the schools is at least inadequate, if not mistaken. And having regard to the just claim that the school should help to right the natural balance of the individual, which the machine and the factory have knocked wholly awry, the inadequacy of aim becomes tragic. The necessity for definite and systematic aesthetic teaching is imposed upon us by the nature of the material we work in. Education has no option but to take service in the cause of beauty; and by one of those paradoxes which are of the very nature of truth, in serving beauty, it will achieve utility.

But it will be said that Drawing, Music, and Poetry—the fine arts in short, are already in the curriculum. Is it seriously argued that the aesthetic capabilities of boys and girls are as sedulously cultivated as the practical? Even when some attempt to train the sense of beauty is made, it is usually looked upon as an 'extra', like the use of the globes in the Victorian Academies. So far from being regarded as part of the texture of the garment, it is treated



as a mere trimming which is fashionable or not according to the current ideas of the great designers of ends in education. Just now it appears to be rather fashionable, but to those who are accustomed to scan the educational heavens, there are unmistakable signs that it is declining. Of course, it never really stood a chance against the latest educational slogan 'Efficiency', and it is like to perish

Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung

long before the next-after-the-latest rally ('Mass-production,' if I may hazard a prophecy) is sounded on the trumpets of Authority.

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that when man loses his sense of beauty, he loses his natural balance, and must crawl instead of standing upright. Just how great a wrong is suffered by the individual it is hard to determine. Dr. Johnson stoutly affirmed that there was as much difference between the lettered and the illiterate as between the living and the dead. This is truly the difference in kind, if not in degree. Some hint of the possible severity of the injury may be found among that mass of information on the needs and the nature of man, which has been thrown up by the war. One interesting and suggestive fact awaits wider recognition. The unfamiliar nervous phenomena associated with shell shock led alienists to inquire anew into the behaviour of the human material under stress and strain; and while it was very commonly observed that the breaking-point was reached soonest with the men who were little more than healthy animals, it was further observed that repressed emotion might, after a term of many years, suddenly discharge itself with such violence as even to cause insanity. The peculiar need of modern man, as acute critics see it, is to keep the emotions from withering at the root. The emotional life is a natural and necessary corrective to the life of reason. Man is ever 'roaming with a hungry heart'; and it is the business of education to open up right channels for the heart's overflowing. Man is not wholly sustained by the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, he must eat too of the Tree of Life, in the study and practice of Art he may find employment for his powers and solace for his spirit.

There is need for training the sense of beauty. Though

the instinct for the beautiful is native in man, good taste is not acquired without apprenticeship. Ruskin preferred 'Home, Sweet Home' to Wagner and confessed an indifference to Beethoven. But then Ruskin's parents would have agreed with the Presbyterian who could not bear to hear the organ praising God alone. In the appreciation of Art, nurture must supplement nature, we must train up the child in the way he should grow.

And especially in Literature does appreciation depend upon training. The taste for good writing is an acquired taste, and in many of its aspects literature makes no immediate appeal to the child. The teacher in the Literature lesson is in effect a broker in Aesthetics. His *market* is Appreciation. Now the root-meaning of Appreciation is to set a *pretium* or price on things. When the value of a work of art, whether it be high or low, is set out in just terms appreciation becomes criticism, and criticism is creative work of a high and rare order. 'The true judges of Poetry (says Lessing) are at all times and in all countries as rare as the Poets themselves.' But, since Appreciation is governed to a certain extent by understanding, some place must be found for an elementary criticism whose *naïveté* shall be redeemed by its honesty. Such criticism will incline rather to praise than censure. Coleridge says somewhere how unpleasant it is to hear the young picking out the flaws and omitting tribute to the excellencies. But whether or no appreciation rather than depreciation is the more seemly attitude for the young, either will be conditioned by their years. Young people read with unquestioning acquiescence, and are attracted by a meretricious glitter of style as the eye of a baby is attracted by artificial light. In young people taste is crude and judgement ill considered. It would be surprising were it otherwise. Appreciation is an act of judgement; we measure (it may be subconsciously) by certain acquired standards, and with the young their standards are still to seek. Mere acquiescence in reading is always the mark of the untrained reader, and one of the most diligent and skilled readers in the ranks of English poets has spoken of its soporific effect.

Who reads

Incessantly, and to his readings brings not  
A spirit and judgement equal or superior  
And what he brings, what need he elsewhere seek ?).

Uncertain and unsettled still remains  
 Deep versed in books and shallow in himself,  
 Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys  
 And trifles for choice matter, worth a sponge,  
 As children gathering pebbles on the shore

It is precisely because children are still on the shore of literature and are apt to mistake toys and trifles for choice matter, that the lessons in Appreciation are so much needed. Two facts stand out clearly. Young readers should know what is beautiful in literature, and at least the attempt must be made to show them why it is beautiful. It is in these two main directions that we can afford tactful companionship on the road and help over the difficult places. Those who remember the hard lot of the miner in a well-known novel who had made his pile and in a determination to improve his mind commenced on a course of Browning, will not be deterred from making the attempt to help their pupils by the fear—sometimes expressed—that they may thrust themselves between the child and his author. Rather will they exert themselves to avoid the age-long reproach that schoolmasters have as a body more often driven the horse from the water than persuaded him to drink.

They will labour for England's disinherited :

Who have hardly heard  
 Sound of her loftiest names, or any word  
 Of all that hath in gold been said and sung,  
 Since him of April heart and morning tongue  
 Her ageless singing bird.

#### WHAT ARE THE AESTHETIC RESOURCES OF THE SCHOOLS ?

Although this chapter is concerned with the appreciation of Literature, Music and Drawing and possibly Physical Exercises afford other and obvious avenues of approach to Art. Something has already been said of the use of music in summoning and reinforcing a mood during the reading of Poetry. An ideal treatment of Aesthetics would make provision for the development of Appreciation in all the arts, on parallel lines. Certain grand principles—selection, variation of treatment, the unity of material, the significance of Form—are common to all the Arts, and

in Utopia, education in Aesthetics will be sufficiently advanced as to make cross-reference between them possible, indeed inevitable. But the time is not yet. There is, however, a reform which is (presumably) not Utopian. Is it impossible for the school architect to give us distinction and grace as well as ventilation and lighting? The barrack school aptly typifies the modern cult of the hygiene of the body as also the modern indifference to the hygiene of the soul. It is a temple reared to Hygeia rather than Minerva. Beauty is not in the bond between the architect and the local authority. Teachers have very little voice in the matter at present, but they should lose no opportunity of protesting against resolute and unabashed ugliness in the school fabric, and there is a responsibility laid on them to exercise some restraint in the hanging of pictures and charts. At one time it was quite common to find diagrams displayed on the walls, exhibiting the internal economy of the human frame in so startling a fashion as to make the beholder exclaim with Hamlet, 'What a piece of work is man!'. And though the interior of the ordinary man is now decently hid from view, yet the exterior of royal personages is often to be seen portrayed in so repulsive a style as to render (one would have thought) as great a disservice to loyalty as it does to art. Where the parsimony of the local authority refuses good pictures to the school, one can, of course, adorn the walls with the Christmas gifts of the local tradesmen. But it is scarcely advisable to do so. A few really good reproductions, such as the Medici or Arundel prints, should be found in every school. The appeal of colour should not be overlooked, and mention may here be made of a series of shipping posters by Frank Brangwyn which are admirable in their opulence of colour, and large enough to make their effect at a fair distance. Again, one or two flower vases of good shape are to be preferred to the array of jam-pots which small boys, anxious to propitiate the teacher, will bring to school in such alarming profusion. The format of the school-book is another important matter. It should be an offence to bind poetry in unbeautiful covers. We want to be rid of the book that could not possibly be mistaken for anything but a school-book. Our aim should be to achieve some standard of beauty inside the school walls,

remembering how little there is of beauty in the streets and in the homes. Anything that may help or hinder (the colour of the walls, for instance) is not unimportant.

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE STUDY OF APPRECIATION

Before addressing ourselves to the details of Method there are certain general considerations which need to be set down here

There is first the series of important questions arising out of the selection of work for purposes of study. In this as in other subjects procedure must be ordered on the known laws of mental growth; we must begin with the simple form rather than the complex, and remember that 'little is gained by enumerating particulars unless the mind is raised to the recognition of general truth'. This means that a true order of difficulty must be preserved and applies both to matter and manner, but particularly to manner. In prose, for example, narrative will precede the literature of exposition or reflection; in poetry the ballad will come before the sonnet. The necessity of observing some scale of difficulty in presenting Literature to children is sufficiently obvious to be overlooked. Thus sonnets are to be found in at least one anthology for junior children, and that difficult prose form the essay is still demanded of the young.

There is no purpose to be served here in renewing the old debate between form and matter, which has been noticed in one of the earlier chapters. It is a quarrel which will scarcely be composed, and it is not pertinent here and now. The selection of subject-matter is critical for the Artist, not because one subject is more poetical than another, but because his treatment will be moulded according to his choice. His immature readers are not in a position either to applaud or deplore that choice. Their greatest need is to be helped to appreciate the excellencies of manner with which the artist presents his theme. But when they are face to face with their author, a further question arises. What place is to be assigned to verbal explanation, that territory which the old-time schoolmaster settled and cultivated with a pathetic industry?

De Quincey once drew a memorable and instructive

distinction between the two great kinds of writing 'There is,' he says, 'first, the literature of knowledge, and secondly the literature of power. The function of the first is to teach, the function of the second is to move. The very highest work that has ever existed in the literature of knowledge is but provisional. All the literature of knowledge builds only ground nests, that are swept away by floods, or confounded by the plough: but the literature of power builds nests in aerial altitudes, in temples sacred from violation, or in forests inaccessible to fraud.'

All this is full of suggestion. The material for our work in Literature falls almost wholly into De Quincey's second class. Though a certain amount of knowledge will undoubtedly be absorbed in the Appreciation process, it is purely a by-product. Emotion and not reason takes the initiative, and always colours the thought. Works of art are not mere matters of fact, and their cognitive aspect is of secondary importance. To labour verbal explanations in literature is simply to miss the *raison d'être*. It is to mistake the bricks and mortar for the building. A child may know the meaning of the word 'eygre' in Jean Ingelow's 'High Tide' and be none the worse for it; but if he does not feel the force and appropriateness of the accompanying similes by which the poet contrives to animate the word, the mere literal meaning is of small value. In the line from *Lycidas*:

At last he rose, and twitch'd his Mantle blew:

it is the way the pent-up energy is released in the word 'twitched' with its harsh and hurried consonants suggestive of a nervous impatience, which is the noteworthy thing, and not the verbal meaning of the word. It is the force and beauty of words to which attention should be primarily directed. And even if the insistence on the purely cognitive aspect of literature were defensible, it is surely a very tortuous method of garnering knowledge.

All this means that the method of studying literature must be literary. One is almost ashamed to have to say this. Literary work must be examined and valued for its literary content; the cognitive aspect, while deserving of attention, is another and a quite different affair.

Reference has been made in the chapter on Reading to

the unique importance of careful and systematic ear-training. A cultivated ear is part of the technique which enables the student to interpret poetry for others and to appreciate it for himself. Ear-training begins long before the technical difficulties of reading are attacked. It is the basis of all work in Appreciation, and it must come first and remain to the last. The mother's voice sets the earliest standard, good or bad, and, obeying some wise and mysterious injunction of nature, mothers, to the horror of the superior person, instinctively soften the harshness and asperities of many words in talking to their little ones. When the child comes to school his ears should be attuned by readings of melodious and graceful language and by the teacher's cultivated speech even before he begins to read. His attention should be drawn to the charm of sound in language, and he should be encouraged to express preferences for the 'nice' words. Children are avid for word music. It was this instinct which prevailed with the small girl when selecting a name for her hypothetical baby. 'When I have a baby girl,' she announced, 'I shall call her Influenza or Chlorodyne, and not Minnie or Ethel.' The famous story of how Cowley at the age of twelve chanced on a volume of Spenser belonging to his mother and was made a poet, as he tells us, 'irremediably', is a further striking illustration of the fact that the imagination may be worked upon and the ear delighted by language which does not reach the understanding. The whole passage is valuable. 'This' (the *Faerie Queene*) 'I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights and giants and monsters, and brave houses which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had little to do with all this) and by degrees with the tinkling of the rhyme and the dance of the numbers, so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a poet as irremediably as a child is made an eunuch.'

When the child has mastered the technical difficulties of reading, a new and powerful aid to culture is ready to the teacher's hand. In the early stages, when taste is of necessity wayward, quantity is important. It is sufficient, and rather more than can be hoped for, if the child turns to good books in preference to bad ones, without

in the least knowing why. The qualities which a child asks for in his private reading should be remembered by the teacher, and he should be at some pains to show that these same qualities are not confined solely to paper backs. The child asks for action—for a story, introduce him to Stevenson or Rider Haggard; he has an appetite for the marvellous; let him read E. A. Poe: he is fascinated by the thrills of crime and its detection; send him to Conan Doyle. Give him too an opportunity of expressing a preference in his reading, but do not press him for reasons. Criticism is a somewhat late growth, indeed many people read for a life-time without even the most elementary criticism of books. Above all, the early appetite for reading must not be stinted. Mr. Fisher, in one of these addresses which sound so strangely in the mouth of an Education minister as we have known them in this country, says, 'The one inexcusable form of parsimony is the neglect to provide a school with books'.

No method of teaching Appreciation is complete which does not make provision for the creative work of the child. A course of appreciation which keeps the student wholly in the rôle of spectator, rests on a very insecure ground. It is necessary that he shall essay to make his own literature. Only by doing so, can he understand the ease and power of great work, and come to appreciate the significance of the Art that conceals Art. In addition the written evidences of self-expression will afford the teacher valuable indication of the pupil's spiritual development and activity. Here I am not concerned so much with the routine exercises of composition, as with those that are consciously directed by the teacher to purely literary ends. After the modes of literary expression have been studied, written practice should be occupied with the handling of such modes. Suppose that the Appreciation lesson has dealt with the music of prose in such a passage as this:

'But when he had now reached that far-off isle, he went forth from the sea of violet blue to get him up into the land, till he came to a great cave, wherein dwelt the nymph of the braided tresses; and he found her within. And on the hearth there was a great fire burning, and from afar through the isle was smelt the fragrance of cleft cedar blazing, and of sandalwood. And the nymph within was singing with a sweet voice as she fared to and fro before the loom, and wove with a shuttle of gold'—*The Odyssey*, Butcher and Lang's translation.



The crown of the lesson lies in what we were once taught to call the Application Stage. After the passage has been examined and its secret extracted (as far as that is possible) the child should be set to write a piece of prose, as musical as he can contrive to make it. Similarly if a certain stanza-form has been examined and its architecture commented on, he should proceed to build up his own stanza from the plan of the model. There is a middle stage between the examination and the imitation of Literature which must not be forgotten. This is the private examination of work by the child in order that he may discover for himself further examples of what has already been noted. The argument for creative work of a purely literary character is plain. If the child is ever to handle language with any sense of pleasure, if he is to show, or even to promise, proofs of power, he must be taught to look on writing as an art. For if composition is wholly employed as a medium for communicating knowledge between teacher and child—knowledge which the one has little or no desire to write, and the other is equally loath to read—its aesthetic value is very readily forecasted.

It is customary to teach a certain amount of the history of literature to elder children. Much harm may be done in pursuing this subject while great tracts of literature remain unsurveyed, but skilfully handled and at the proper season, it may be made of very great cultural value. There is a possible danger that the young student may absorb critical opinions to which, intellectually, he has no title. The attitude of pretentiousness is neither honest nor seemly, but it has peculiar attractions for children. There is the further danger that the collection of names and dates which often does duty for a history of literature with the young, directly encourages the growth of the first 'distemper of learning'. Teachers above all people need to remind themselves of the comment of Johnson 'I am not yet so lost in lexicography as to forget that words are the daughters of earth and that things are the sons of heaven.' There are in truth far too many books about books. We are deluged with trivialities and gossip about letters and literary men. Unfortunately many readers appear to content themselves with this literary hearsay, nay, even to prefer it to literature itself. It is essential that any

historical treatment of literature should keep the works of literature conspicuously in view. Biographical details are important only so far as they relate a man to his work and through his work to literature as a whole. It is true that poets are the children of their age, and there can be no more fascinating work than observing how the poet's thought and form is coloured by time and place. But this is scarcely work for the young. What is wanted in the schools is not so much a history of writers as of writing. It may even be doubted whether biography is a suitable form in which to present the subject to children. The writer's life sounds humdrum in their ears, in comparison with the famous soldier or sailor he seems but a dull creature with ink instead of blood in his veins. They do not see the curtain rise on that spiritual drama in which the artist plays so fascinating a part.

But if the biographical presentation is attempted, it should be possible to give reality to the work by undertaking alongside it, a portion of elementary criticism. In prose, for example, if the sentence could be observed inchoate and sprawling as it is in Elizabethan literature, majestic but unmanageable for ordinary mortals as in Milton, gaining in suppleness and facility as in the Jacobean letter-writers, symmetrical as a Dutch garden in Johnsonian prose, recovering freedom and elasticity in the writers of the last century; if, further, form could be placed against form for comparison or contrast, the insidious ripple of short-sentenced prose, for instance, balanced against the sustained surge and subsidence of the longer period; if, in addition, the peculiar advantages and defects of both varieties and the technique of their adjustment to the demands of the subject-matter could be shown—if teaching of this kind could be undertaken in the class-room, then the history of Literature might become one of the most fruitful of all the cultural subjects.

I have spoken of criticism, and there is really no less pretentious word for the habit of which we could desire for our adolescents. It is not merely that they should turn to good literature in preference to bad; it is that they should know what constitutes goodness in literature, and, by contrast, the marks of trivial and incompetent work. Iago's jest, 'I am nothing if not critical', is quite literally

true. Only by achieving the critical outlook will the student discover his own intellectual identity and attain to the mastery of his literary fate. Nothing less will enable him to stand his ground against the rising tide of best-sellers. The main aim of all juvenile essays in the field of criticism should be directed to enabling them to relish the savour of style. We are all aware that style is the man, and because the personal equation is the really important equation in Art (always a product of the most intense individualism) the appreciation of style is at once the highest and most fruitful study in literature. Style is to be apprehended through the ear, and assimilated through learning by heart and through imitation. Teaching in this kind is delicate and difficult work. It requires knowledge, enthusiasm, and the faith that removes mountains. It is probably best done by the well-informed amateur; the expert is too well aware of the difficulties, and is prone to suffer from that heaviness of spirit which seems to be the peculiar fate of all who attain to expert knowledge, and are paid to impart it.

The pupil's progress, it is scarcely needful to say, cannot be judged by his ability to perform certain 'regulated acts', but by the power and freshness of his interest. The old standards of judging will hardly do when aesthetic teaching is being attempted. A great deal of the work is not examinable. But in a country where a knowledge of religion continues to earn marks, it is hardly possible that the teaching of appreciation where it is practised will escape assessment. Again, it is certain that the complete utilitarian will regard the work as a fad, and urge the substitution of a more marketable knowledge. The idealist (and no one can attempt to teach appreciation unless he is an idealist) must be prepared to remain lonely. It is the price he has to pay for his idealism. And it should be said in conclusion, that unless the work gives pleasure to the learner (and I would add, to the teacher also) it will fail of its high purpose. 'Plato in his *Republic*', says Professor Campbell, 'states this principle with startling distinctness. "All learning to be worth anything must be voluntary and accompanied with pleasure. The sense of compulsion is unworthy of the sons of freemen, and enforced study is neither lasting nor fruitful."' And Plato has

another hard saying. 'The aim must be not useful knowledge, but liberal culture.' To him who cannot receive such doctrine, the meaning and purpose of aesthetic education will remain hidden.

Two pertinent questions demand to be answered. What are the values in Literature which can be appreciated by children? How can the teacher help on the growth of Appreciation? In the sections that follow, I have tried to keep in mind the needs of the teacher who is anxious to emphasize the right values in Literature.

Undoubtedly, the most excellent way of helping a child to appreciate literature, is to share your own appreciation with him. There are two, and only two ways of doing this. The first is by reading good literature aloud with relish and sincerity. This has been dealt with in Chapter IV. The second way is by taking the lead in an intensive study of literature, and this is our present concern. But it is useless to begin this detailed study before children are instructed in the values of literature. The ground must be prepared before intensive cultivation is possible. That is, an answer must be found for the first of our two questions before the second can be asked, and answered. Literature is to be valued for its music and for its ornaments—that is, for its beauty, and for its fineness and fitness of form—that is, for its order. This is no artificial list drawn up for the convenience of such sectionizing as the schoolmaster is said to be prone to; nor are these mere academic virtues. They are insisted upon again and again by those who should best know—the great writers themselves. Their precept is precious; for if it does not wholly impart the secret of good writing, yet it does afford guidance in formulating the canons of excellence, and establishing the standards of taste. A few proofs must suffice.

Hazlitt in the essay on the prose style of poets writes: 'A poet will be at a loss and flounder about for the common or (as we understand it) *natural* order of words in prose composition.' Coleridge, in an oft-quoted passage from his *Table Talk*, says: 'I wish our clever young poets would remember my homely definitions of prose and poetry; that is prose—words in their best order;—poetry, the best words in the best order.'

Landor writes: 'Good prose, to say nothing of the

original thoughts it conveys, may be infinitely varied in modulation. It is only an extension of metres, an amplification of harmonies of which even the best and most varied poetry admits but few'

Lytton, speaking of this same matter of rhythm, says 'Every style has its appropriate music; but without a music of some kind it is not style—it is scribbling'

And Ben Jonson: 'Pure and neat language I love, yet plain and customary. A barbarous phrase hath often made me out of all patience with a good sense, and doubtful writing hath racked me beyond endurance.'

It will be seen that the two great commandments implicit in these extracts are Order and Beauty.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF ORDER

The right ordering of both material and language which is the first excellence of good writing, is without doubt the most difficult of all writing values for the teacher to explain and for children to appreciate. It is an intellectual quality, and its appreciation is intellectual in kind rather than emotional. The art which has gone to the fashioning of a piece of well-made prose results in work so inevitable that it is accepted without question and without admiration. Gross breaches of the law of order, as the advertisement in a Scotch newspaper, 'A clergyman in P—— wishes to purchase a small donkey to do the work of a minister', are of course easily detected by children. There is an amusing list given in *The King's English* which can readily be used in the class. But the exquisite organization of language, so that every phrase functions with charm and power, is a much more subtle quality than the mere arranging of words to make sense. Consider such a passage as Goldsmith's description of Dr. Primrose's retreat:

'The place of our retreat was in a little neighbourhood, consisting of farmers, who tilled their own ground, and were equal strangers to opulence and poverty. As they had almost all the conveniences of life within themselves, they seldom visited towns or cities in search of superfluities. Remote from the polite they still retained the primeval simplicity of manners and, frugal by habit, they scarcely knew that temperance was a virtue. They wrought with cheerfulness on days of labour, but observed festivals as intervals of idleness and pleasure. They kept up the Christmas carol, sent true love-knots

on Valentine morning, ate pancakes on Shrovetide, showed their wit on the 1st of April, and religiously cracked nuts on Michaelmas-eve. Being apprised of our approach, the whole neighbourhood came out to meet their minister, dressed in their finest clothes, and preceded by pipe and tabor : a feast also was provided for our reception, at which we sate cheerfully down ; and what the conversation wanted in wit was made up in laughter

'Our little habitation was situated at the foot of a sloping hill, sheltered with a beautiful under-wood behind, and a prattling river before, on one side a meadow, on the other a green. My farm consisted of about twenty acres of excellent land, having given a hundred pounds for my predecessor's good-will. Nothing could exceed the neatness of my little enclosures, the elms and hedgerows appearing with inexpressible beauty.'

Here is a piece of writing exact enough to have satisfied Quintilian ;<sup>1</sup> but how can we bring children to an appreciation of the felicity of manner and skilful selection of material ? There is a purely negative method not without value. Set against this passage such an outrage on language as Mrs Nickleby's account of the French journeyman shoemaker's passion.

"'Upon my word, my dear, I don't know," returned Mrs. Nickleby, "really I don't know. I am sure there was a case in the day before yesterday's paper, extracted from one of the French newspapers, about a journeyman shoemaker who was jealous of a young girl in an adjoining village because she wouldn't shut herself up in an airtight three pair of stairs and charcoal herself to death with him, and who went and hid himself in a wood with a sharp-pointed knife, and rushed out as she was passing by with a few friends, and killed himself first, and then all the friends, and then her—no, killed all the friends first, and then herself, and then *himself*—which it is quite frightful to think of. Somehow or other", added Mrs. Nickleby, after a momentary pause, "they always *are* journeyman shoemakers who do these things in France, according to the papers. I don't know how it is—something in the leather, I suppose."

Stimulated by the contrast, the child may feel that these are indeed the 'realms of chaos and old Night'. And if he is set to discover similar contrasts—incidentally what a boon an anthology of really bad prose and verse would be to the teacher of Appreciation—the lesson may be driven home.

Both extracts should be read aloud, the wail of Mrs. Nickleby with a breathless incoherence punctuated—in the

<sup>1</sup> 'Care should be taken not that the reader may understand if he will, but that he must understand whether he will or not.'

wrong places—by gasps. Ask for a reproduction in speech of the Goldsmith, and let volunteers attempt the wellnigh impossible task of pruning Mrs. Nickleby's 'wonderful luxuriance of amiable fatuity', as Gissing calls it, into something like order.

In addition to the stimulus afforded by the mere contrast of order and chaos, some of the positive virtues of the one and the vices of the other extract should be pointed out. The antithesis in Goldsmith, 'days of labour'—'intervals of leisure', is a real antithesis of sense as well as of construction, and contributes very largely to the clarity of the expression. It may be contrasted with the mere antithesis of cadence as found at times in Johnson. There is no overloading with epithets—two only in the first three sentences—no ornamental distractions, and no artificial inversions. And the end in view is accomplished with a surprising economy of material.

In the Dickens caricature there is no relationship between the ideas, and the conclusion of a sentence frequently forgets or disowns its beginning. It is the tale of the cow with the crumpled horn; image is piled on image, contradiction on contradiction, until the whole crazy structure collapses ignominiously and buries the reader under a débris of words. Furthermore, and this should be emphasized with children, there is no appointed end; like all the garrulous race, Mrs. Nickleby doesn't know where she wants to go, and doesn't mind whether she gets there or not.

Inversion, although treated by some writers as a figure of speech is closely connected with Order. It occurs when a word or phrase is removed with design, out of its natural place in the sentence. The beginning and end of the sentence occupy the most conspicuous and emphatic places, but especially the beginning; as in

Great is Diana of the Ephesians,

and

Day after day, day after day  
We stuck, nor breath nor motion,

where the emphasis of inversion is added to the emphasis of repetition. Unless the matter is of sufficient interest to bear the high light thrown upon it by such emphatic

inversions as the above, the result is apt to sound a trifle ridiculous. Inversion is also used to give a better poise to sentences or to prevent ambiguity, and for either of these purposes it is again a two-edged tool. Sentences taken from the child's work may be inverted by the teacher, and occasionally the child may be asked to invert sentences from his own work with a view to discovering (a) that inversion is a means of varying the sentence form, (b) that inversion is frequently undesirable.

In verse the exigencies of form frequently call for inversion. Spenser constantly uses it to enable him to master his complicated stanza, and it is a tribute to the astounding craft-manship that although his inversions are frequently of a most drastic character, as

This man of infinite remembrance was,

or

The wars he well remembered of King Nine,

his muse rarely sings out of tune.

Of the right ordering of matter through a correct use of paragraph sequence, such as is to be found at its best in Froude or Macaulay, children are not competent to judge. Further opportunity will be found in the written exercises to direct attention to the first law of writing—Order.

### THE PRINCIPLE OF BEAUTY

There is much difference of opinion as to what constitutes beauty in writing. Some would find it in the transparency of such a style as we have just examined, some in the intricate labyrinths of echoing sound which Milton wrote naturally, and De Quincey contrived with calculated art; others again find their ideal in the clean incisive strokes of Swift, and yet others in the delicate nuances of Jane Austen. But all the connoisseurs would be likely to agree with what I have previously quoted of Lytton, 'Every style has its appropriate music'.

If children have been exercised in ear-training, they will be able to perceive melodious prose and poetry when it is read aloud. Elder children should be further practised in recognizing musical passages through silent reading. It is just as easy for the teacher to say, 'In five minutes



I shall ask you to read a musical passage to me ' as to say, ' John Jones, commence reading at the bottom of page 79 '. Poetry is more easily selected than prose, and a good deal of practice will be needed before the music of either prose or poetry can be heard through the eye. But when an attempt is made to wrest the secret of melody out of the heart of a passage the teacher's help will be indispensable. Suppose that the extracts given below are to be examined for felicity of diction .

(a) Until the day break and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and the hill of frankincense

(b) In the April blue I heard the wild aerial chimes of song, and watched the golden fulfilment of the day under the high illimitable arch of noon.

(c) But the majestic River floated on  
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,  
Rejoicing, through the hushed Chorasmian waste  
Under the solitary moon.

(d) The hunched camels of the night  
Trouble the bright  
And silver waters of the moon  
The Maiden of the Morn will soon  
Through Heaven stray and sing,  
Star gathering.

In extract (a) the music depends very largely upon the number and variety of the open vowels which might be underlined and numbered for reference. The vowel variation in the second extract is scarcely so striking, but there is a very delicate succession of melodious 'l's' and the last two rhythmic phrases are beautifully poised against each other: 'and watched the golden fulfilment of the day' balances 'under the high illimitable arch of noon'. The symmetry of these two phrases is exact almost to a syllable, and it would take a nice ear to decide whether the omission of the one word 'high' which would give an exact syllabic balance to the phrases, would be a blemish or an improvement. There is further that blending of long and short words, which is one of the secrets of melodious writing. In the blank verse (c) the troublesome letter, 's' is so skilfully managed as to serve for song, and there is again the deft mixture of long and short words. It was suggested during the examination of this passage that the use of the

place name was an added charm, but of course Arnold himself and notably Milton have both made much more sonorous music out of proper names, as for example :

What resounds of Uther's son  
Or all who since, baptized or infidel,  
Jousted at Aspramont or Montalban,  
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebizond,  
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore,  
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell  
By Fontarabbia

The last extract enjoys the powerful aid of rhyme, but the delicate pattern of sound woven out of the interlacing alliteration of 's' and 'm' should be observed. In all the extracts (but especially in the prose) the rise and fall of the cadence, and the silences between the rhythmic bursts, are of the very nature of music.

Inquiry into the means of harmony will naturally lead to some discussion on the cause and cure of discords in writing. The following extract is from an account of the strenuous life pleasantly varied by periods of somnolence, which appears to be the hard lot of the American tramp.

' Snow was beginning to fall. A cold night was coming on. But the walls were thick. There was no way for the outside cold to get in. But the inside was as cold as the outside. How to raise the temperature was the problem. But trust a "profesh" for that. Out of my pockets I dug up three or four newspapers. These I burned one at a time, on the floor of the car. The smoke rose to the top. Not a bit of the heat could escape, and, warm and comfortable I passed a comfortable night. I didn't wake up at once. In the morning it was still snowing '

These are spasms rather than sentences. The style is winded without ever getting into its stride, and the harsh succession of stony monosyllables make the reader's progress so thoroughly uncomfortable that the very act of turning the page is a relief. There is no space in the periods (compare the first three sentences) for the rhythmic swell. And there is a jingle in the last sentence.

But with all its faults this style is not so unpleasant as the following :

' A great accession of new population and new voters in a great industrial constituency like the Rand would give the concentrated increment necessary for additional seats in the House. The aggregate

growth of population in the country as compared with the towns might be larger, but the towns make a highly exaggerated and artificial claim for mere representation'

Here the rhythm is crippled by the dragging accumulation of sounds. There is no buoyancy such as is felt in all good prose and the sheer weight of the polysyllables impedes, in fact wholly destroys the movement. There is a marked absence of open vowels (in the first sentence three only in twenty-nine words as compared to nine in twenty-three words in extract (a)).

Both writers are rightly conscious that the style should suit the material. But the starkness of style which is presumably the aim of the first writer, results in a pitiable attenuation; while the dignity of movement which the second writer thinks becoming to high politics, is in effect only the waddle of ill-conditioned verbosity.

Clashes and jingles both in prose and verse are the cause of disastrous rifts in the lute. There is an example in the extract from Cowley's 'Essay on Himself' quoted on p. 183 ('which I found everywhere there'). In this connexion, De Quincey has an interesting account of what he terms a 'judicious amendment' which Wordsworth introduced into the North-country rhyming prayer used by De Quincey's little daughter. The original verse runs

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,  
Look upon a little child,  
Pity my simplicity,  
Grant that I may come to Thee.

Wordsworth, offended by the idle iteration of the one idea in the words gentle, meek, mild, amended the first line into

Holy Jesus, meek and mild,

thereby creating a quite gratuitous jingle (*ly je*) in addition to the one already in the line. Curiously enough, Wordsworth objected to the jingle in Shakespeare's line,

The singing masons building roofs of gold,

and said that Milton would never have allowed it to stand. All of which goes to show that even great critics are not always equal to themselves.

Attempt should be made to show that mere sweetness without strength is of little value. It is commonly found

when technique outruns inspiration, as in this from an Elizabethan poet :

I wrote in Mirrha's bark, and as I wrote  
 Poor Mirrha wept, because I wrote forsaken,  
 'Twas of thy pride I sung in weeping note,  
 When as her leaves great moon for pity maken.  
 The falling fountains, from the mountains falling,  
 Cried out alas, so fair and be so ruthless,  
 And babbling echoes never ceased calling,  
 Phyllis disdain is fit for none but truthless.

In Touchstone's phrase this is to have 'honey a sauce to sugar', whereas the ideal lies rather in the words of Samson's riddle 'Out of the strong came forth sweetness'.

So far we have dealt with the cardinal principles of Order and Beauty. There are certain devices which serve both principles, such are Repetition, the Figures of Speech, Onomatopoeia or Echo-writing, the Epithet. It is largely through a skilful use of these that the writer charms his reader to an attention. Echo-writing has already been dealt with both in the chapter on Reading and on Verse-making.

#### REPETITION IN LITERATURE

Repetition is a device which is easily staled in unskilful hands, but happily employed it is extraordinarily moving. One use of repetition is seen in such a stanza as 'Waken, lords and ladies gay', where it serves to complete a pattern. But it would seem that its finest use is when it comes from a full heart. David's lament over Absalom, which no writer on repetition can help quoting, is perhaps the finest artistic use of repetition in our literature. 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom ! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son !'

So skilful is the sentence architecture that if an attempt is made to alter either the number or the order of the repeated phrases, the prose falls to pieces. Particularly noteworthy is the inversion in the last repetition, which while sustaining the emotional appeal, avoids the monotony which comes of sameness.

Variation is very happily managed in Kingsley's 'Sands of Dee'. The new growth budding afresh from the old

stock, combines the charm of surprise with the homeliness of familiarity. There is a beautiful example of this in the two versions of the Milking Song in 'High Tide on the coast of Lincolnshire'. The two main uses of repetition are to sustain the sound and to emphasize the sense, and though both these uses are constantly combined, yet they are sufficiently separated to make a useful distinction when discussing this matter with children. There is very remarkable repetition for sound in Christina Rossetti's 'The Knell of the Year', which rhymes the 'a' vowel fourteen times in three stanzas as a final rhyme. Another notable example is the poem of Dr. Bridges beginning

Awake, my heart, to be loved, awake, awake.

One or both of these poems should certainly be read to the children, and at least the verse writers who have often been brought to a pause for a single rhyme, will hardly fail to pay tribute to the astounding craftsmanship. Repetition, it has been said, is the soul of the ballads

There were twa sisters lived in a bower,  
Binnore, O Binnore,  
There cam a Knight to be their wooer,  
By the bonnie mill dams o' Binnore

It is easy to see what a welcome respite was given to invention (it is seen again in such verse forms as the Ballads, the Triolet, and Rondeau), and the respite must have been doubly welcome when the minstrel sought to turn a compliment to his audience in an improvised stanza. Not infrequently repetition in the ballad justifies itself on the ground of music alone.

O we were sisters, sisters seven  
Bowing down, bowing down,  
The fairest women under heaven;  
And aye the birks a' bowing

He must be as the 'deaf adder which stoppeth her ears' who could object to that as a vain repetition.

In Elizabethan poetry, repetition is frequently used with an echo intention (Jug-jug, pew wee, tu witta woo); often it is purely nonsensical, as in the ducdame, ducdame, ducdame, of Jaques's song; often it is a refrain obviously intended for music, and usually placed at the end of the stanza (Heigh trololie, lollie, loe). It is somewhat rare to

find a phrase caught up again and worked into the body of the stanza. There is an example in the little known but beautiful song 'Logan Braes', and another in William Barnes's 'The Lost Wife'.

By Logan's streams that rin sae deep,  
Fu' oft wi' glee I've herded sheep;  
Herded sheep and gathered slaes,  
Wi' my dear lad on Logan braes  
But wae's my heart, thae days are gane  
And I wi' grief may herd alane,  
While my dear lad maun face his faes  
Far, far frae me and Logan braes

One of the most beautiful uses of repetition is when it helps in the creation of atmosphere. For such a poem as Dobell's 'Keith of Ravelston', the repeated line falls on the ear with the relentless and forboding sound of a passing bell. It is the very accent of doom.

Repetition in prose is made to serve for humour, for clearness, for emphasis.

An example in each kind should be pointed out by the teacher—Dickens and Borrow frequently use the device for humour, and almost any page of Bagehot will supply examples of the use of repetition for the sake of emphasis and clearness. The class should be set to collect instances from their prose anthology, and to classify the usages. Almost as fine as in David's lament over Jonathan is the repetition in St. Paul's *Apologia pro vita sua* in Corinthians xi, and especially the memorable and moving verse beginning 'In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers . . .' It should certainly be added to the list. Repetition for the sake of emphasis is a device of the orator (a boy suggested as an example, the repetition of the text in a sermon), and it should be observed that what is necessary in speech may be superfluous in writing. The repetition of speech is often used in what William Watson calls 'cantative literature', as in the song of Deborah and Barak, where the superb reiteration beats out with savage energy, passionate and reverberating blows.

She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples.

At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

This is, too, a wonderful example of the persuasive power of writing. The beautiful and betraying rhetoric entirely disarms the moral sense: we exult with Deborah when we ought to be condemning the unspeakable treachery which is her theme.

Children take a natural delight in repetition, and the teller of tales is never allowed to omit or alter the invocation oft repeated, whereby the enchanter works his magic art. If the teacher is competent, reference should most certainly be made to the sister art of Music in dealing with Repetition. In Music, repetition is essential, because the nature of the material is so fleeting, that unless a theme is recaptured and presented again, it may be several times, it escapes the hearer too quickly. The same need, although it is not so pressing as in music, accounts for the repetitions in continuous speech. The way in which the successive repetitions of Music take on new colour and ornament while retaining a blood relationship to the original theme, is a beautiful illustration of the manner in which the true artist will make necessity serve the cause of beauty. Chopin—*Impromptu*, Op 29, 2nd movement; Mozart *Sonata*, No 9 (slow movement), or any of Beethoven's thematic variations will serve admirably for cross references

#### THE FIGURES OF SPEECH

The end of the figures of Speech is to strengthen and beautify writing. They are not mere ornaments although they serve to adorn, but their finest use is seen when they appear woven into the web of the material. In presenting the figures to children it is not sufficient to rely on the definitions given in the grammar books. As a matter of fact, if a child can recognize a figure and use it correctly in his own writing, he will not need a definition: if it is thought advisable to teach him some form of explanatory words he should be challenged to construct his own definition out of his acquaintance with the figure defined. There is no need to deal with the less well-known figures; and it so happens that the forbidding nomenclature (*Polysyndeton*, *Epanorthosis*, *Aposiopesis*) is sufficient in itself to repulse the advances of any of the student race less hardy than grammarians.

Almost all the figures which should be known and practised by children may be grouped under the headings of comparison. Comparison gives rise to such figures as—The Simile, Metaphor, Allegory, Personification. These are the figures which may most profitably be dealt with.

The writing value of the Simile is to enliven and enlighten the subject. An excellent approach to the Simile is to discover and exhibit a simile which has been used unconsciously in the written work. Like the character in the French play who spoke prose without being aware of it, children often make an unwitting use of this as of the other figures. Attention should be directed to establishing (a) The comparison must be a natural one, (b) It must neither be too obvious nor too fantastical. When Francis Thompson says of the poppy,

Like a yawn of fire from the grass it came,  
And the fanning wind puffed it to flapping flame,

he strikes out a comparison both revealing and pictorial. The brief span and the swift and eager beauty both of flame and the poppy justify the simile. When Gilbert White, speaking of the flight of the kingfisher, writes 'he darts along like an arrow', or when Oscar Wilde wishing to avoid the triteness of such a well-worn comparison, adds to it a metaphor,

The Kingfisher flies like an arrow, and wounds the air,

we feel that the simile helps a great deal in projecting the picture. But when a stream is spoken of as shining in a flowery meadow 'like a gold chain on an embroidered waistcoat' the comparison is such as only a profiteer could take delight in: true it is pictorial in a false and flashy manner, but the comparison is what the eighteenth-century critic was accustomed to call 'low'. And when a metaphysical poet, speaking of the ravages of the small-pox, compares the pustules to drops of dew, we are offended at having such a fantastical and odious a comparison thrust upon our notice. The simile must not offend against good taste. One of the most beautiful of colours is the delicate pink inside a porker's ear, but it would be unwise in the young poet to swear that the bloom on his lady's cheek rivalled that on a young sow's ear.



It has been said that the simile is pictorial. Children respond very readily to the appeal to the eye, and they should be trained to look for the pictures in both prose and verse. There is a very striking series of pictorial similes in Christina Rossetti's 'Goblin Market'

Laura stretched her gleaming neck,  
Like a rush embedded swan,  
Like a lily from the beck,  
Like a moonlit poplar branch,  
Like a vessel at the launch,  
When its last restraint is gone

and description of a runner.

Her locks streamed like the torch  
Borne by a racer at full speed,  
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,  
Or like an eagle when she stem'd the light,  
Or like a caged thing freed,  
Or like a flying flag when armies run

The mature reader may feel that this is the light of pyrotechny rather than of truth. But the mere vehemence and stir of the procession of images is attractive to children. It is interesting to contrast the means which Matthew Arnold employs in *Tristram and Iseult* to draw a precisely similar picture (children asleep in bed) as is to be found in the early part of the 'Goblin Market'.

This is Christina Rossetti's charming picture—

Golden head by golden head,  
Like two pigeons in one nest,  
Folded in each other's wings  
They lay down in their curtained bed,  
Like two blossoms on one stem,  
Like two flakes of new fall'n snow,  
Like two wands of ivory  
Tipped with gold for awful Kings  
Moon and stars gazed in at them,  
Wind sang to them lullaby,  
Lumbering owls forbore to fly.

And this is Arnold's—

But they sleep in shelter'd rest,  
Like helpless birds in the warm nest,  
On the Castle's southern side,  
Where feebly comes the mournful roar  
Of buffeting wind and surging tide  
Through many a room and corridor.

Full on their window the moon's ray  
 Makes their chamber as bright as day ;  
 It shines upon the blank white walls  
 And on the snowy pillow falls,  
 And on two angel-heads doth play  
 Turn'd to each other—the eyes closed.  
 The lashes on the cheeks repos'd  
 Round each sweet brow the cap close-set  
 Hardly lets peep the golden hair ,  
 Through the soft-open'd lips the air  
 Scarcely moves the coverlet  
 One little wandering arm is thrown  
 At random on the counterpane,  
 And often the fingers close in haste  
 As if their baby owner chased  
 The butterflies again.

Arnold contents himself with a single simile. Christina Rossetti uses four, some of them patently extravagant. Would Arnold, one wonders, have condemned the Rossetti extract for its 'caprice' and 'eccentricity' grounds of objection which he urged so powerfully against a great deal of the poetry of his own time? After observing and discovering similes, children should be set to construct similes for such things as fire, the stars, snow, the sun.

Mr. Lamborn in the *Rudiments of Criticism* gives a description of metaphor which can very readily be understood by children. 'Metaphor calls one thing by the name of another to give a better picture of it.' Thus we may say 'Tom Jones ran as fast as a fox in the sports this afternoon', or 'I expected that young fox Jones would win the obstacle race' with a corresponding gain in vividness and concentration. Metaphor is the most striking of all the Figures, and the most economical. It has this advantage over simile, that whereas the simile may only present one picture at a time, so that in order to get a comprehensive view it is often necessary to add other similes dealing with fresh aspects of the subject, metaphor fuses many separate characteristics into a unity. Thus in the metaphor given above, the running of Jones takes on the cunning of the fox, and its trick of doubling as well as its speed.

In the brevity of the metaphor lies a great deal of its power.

The trees are Indian princes,  
 But soon they'll turn to ghosts.

Compare this with a direct description of trees in autumn and winter, and it will be realized how much language owes to the lightning flash of metaphor. Metaphors are the texts of literature and like the texts of sermons, they remain unexhausted after the exposition, nay, remain more pregnant than the exposition itself. The contrast between the simile and the metaphor should itself be enforced by exhibiting the two side by side, and dealing with the same subject,

Dear nature is the kindest mother still,  
and the more diffuse simile—

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er  
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,  
Half willing, half reluctant to be led  
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,  
So Nature deals with us, and takes away  
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand  
Leads us to rest

There is a useful practice of expanding metaphors into similes and contracting similes into metaphors which may be employed with a caution. The material for the practice should preferably be home made. It is scarcely consistent to regard the Paraphrase as an outrage, and at the same time invite children to pull a really fine metaphor to pieces in order to construct a trite simile. To do so, as with the Paraphrase, is to deny the principle of *le mot juste*. There is, of course, a deal of written work which can be drawn on without scruple.

The sustained use of Metaphor is well seen in such a poem as Longfellow's 'Sir Humphrey Gilbert'. After a first reading the class should be set to trace the flight of the Metaphor, and to bring together the lines in which it appears. In sustained Metaphor the Figure begins to stand off into Allegory. In contrast to this elaboration of Metaphor is the staccato use so admirably managed in many of Stevenson's Essays. This is taken almost at random :

'When a man's heart warms to his viands, he forgets a great deal of sophistry, and soars into a rosy zone of contemplation. Death may be knocking at the door, we have something else in hand, thank God, and let him knock. Passing bells are ringing all the world over. All the world over, and every hour, some one is parting company with all his aches and ecstasies. For us also the trap is laid

But we are so fond of life that we have no leisure to entertain the terror of death. It is a honeymoon to us all through and none of the longest. Small blame to us if we give our whole hearts to this glowing bride of ours'

Here the metaphors are dropped as if hot. They do not outstay their usefulness, and they have a vivacity due to their short term which is often absent from the full-dress metaphor. Tony Weller's letters in *Pickwick* are full of horsey metaphors, and can be used with profit and amusement in the class-room. After hearing them, children might be asked to write a description of a football match, or a bargain sale, using military metaphors. A great deal of what was once conscious metaphor, is now read without a metaphorical significance. If the child's dictionary gives the word roots—as it should do—some of these dead metaphors should be dissected, in order that he may realize how much of language is in truth, frozen metaphor.

Personification is the oldest, and in some ways the most beautiful of all the figures. It is characteristic of childhood whether of the race or of the individual, and it is not wholly subdued either by civilization or upbringing. Personification is often the outward showing of affection, and so the sailor refers to his ship as 'she', and the four-year-old to his engine as 'he'. Possibly such simple and natural Personification as the child and the sailor make for themselves arises from the instinct of the lonely human heart hungry for kinship with the visible and familiar things of everyday life. It is the same instinct which leads some men when they are alone, to clasp trees and to seek the embrace of the springing grasses. The Personification prompted by the affections is very different from the artificial Personification often foisted on children for Composition themes. It is not possible to imagine any human child conceiving such a passion for an old pen, as would move him to write about it naturally in the first person.

The full-dress Personification, as in the extract from Spenser given below, sounds a little self-conscious in modern ears :

Lastly, came Winter clothed all in frieze,  
Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill ;  
Whilst on his hoary beard his breath did freeze  
And the dull drops, that from his purpled bill

As from a limbeck did adown distil,  
 In his right hand a tipped staff he held,  
 With which his feeble steps he stayed still ;  
 For he was faint with cold, and weak with eld,  
 That scarce his loosed limbs he able was to weld.

The modern writer does not make such a parade of the Figure, neither does he overwork it as did the eighteenth-century writer whose page was besprinkled with the capitals of personified vices and virtues. The capitals have disappeared, and with them has gone the too facile use which devitalized Personification so thoroughly, as to leave it little more than a hack-writer's convention.

The modern use of Personification usually marks a rising emotion. There is nothing frigid in this from a famous love passage in Meredith :

'The sun is coming down to earth, and the fields and the waters shout to him golden shouts. He comes, and his heralds run before him, and touch the leaves of oaks and planes and beeches lucid green, and the pine-stems a redder gold.' It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that all eighteenth-century Personification is cold and calculated.

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest  
 By all their country's wishes blest !  
 When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,  
 Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,  
 She there shall dress a sweeter sod  
 Than Fancy's feet have ever trod

By fairy hands their knell is rung ,  
 By forms unseen their dirge is rung ,  
 There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey  
 To bless the turf that wraps their clay ,  
 And Freedom shall awhile repair  
 To dwell, a weeping hermit there

This is unmistakably in the eighteenth-century idiom, yet it is unmistakably generous and warm-hearted. Nature is almost always personified in the poets, and Ruskin's unfortunate remark on the pathetic fallacy has bequeathed to criticism a catchword which (so it appears) is to be applied in the following circumstances. 'When the personification of Nature goes so far as to make her show interest in human action either by sympathy or by antipathy, we have what has been called the "pathetic fallacy".'

But the beauty of the figure in such a passage as this below is not to be cried down by a phrase.

Call it not vain they do not err,  
 Who say that, when the Poet dies,  
 Mute Nature mourns her worshipper  
 And celebrates his obsequies  
 Who say, tall cliff and cavern lone  
 For the departed Bard make moan.

The best way of bringing children to an appreciation of this figure is to set it for a writing exercise. The exercise should be related to an example which has been already noticed, and this example might be set at the head of the exercise.

Where the great Sun begins his state  
 Rob'd in flames, and Amber light  
 The clouds in thousand liveries dight.

This could be used as a heading for a Personification on the Moon. I give a short extract from a piece of prose composition, in order to show that Apostrophe, together with Personification, is used very naturally by children. 'O moon, why shinest thou amidst the glorious lights of heaven? Why shinest thou in the country afar, thou art the lamp by night and thou guidest the way by day. What a number of princes and nobles thou hast! Ah! those beautiful princes are beautiful fairies and thou art the Lady Queen. Jupiter and Mars are thy chief princes, and the others are thy lords and servants. Where are thy banners and spears, and thy seas and thy rivers, and all thy forests, O moon?'

#### EPITHETS

It has always seemed to me that the capacity to discover and the zest to relish a fine epithet, is in itself no mean test for the appreciation of literature.

And bade betwixt their shores to be  
 The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

There is a poignancy and power in these epithets which both challenges and evades criticism. Or in this passage: 'In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth toward the journeying Moon and the stars that still sojourn, yet still

move onward.' Whence comes the magic in 'journeying Moon'?

And thou, O lover that art on the watch,  
Where, on the banks of the forgetful streams,  
The pale indifferent ghosts wander, and snatch  
The sweeter moments of their broken dreams,—

What is there so memorable in 'pale indifferent ghosts' ? Part of the charm lies undoubtedly in the depth of suggestion which the fine epithet discovers. The epithet in the hands of the master is almost inexhaustible in significance and suggestion. How pregnant, for example, are the epithets which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of perhaps the most witless of his women—Ophelia ?

But, good my brother,  
Do not as some ungracious pastors do,  
Shew me the steep and thorny way to heaven,  
Whiles like a puffed and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,  
And recks not his own rede.

It will be seen that the thought turns largely on the epithets, and there is enough material in these alone to set up a minor poet in a flourishing way of business.

In Macaulay's line,

Night sank upon the dusky beach and on the purple sea,

the epithets are both pictorial and just, yet their significance is literal and therefore limited. And the epithet of quality too often multiplies into a catalogue, as in the following :

'And then there were all kinds of sweet flowers growing on the rocks, bright green moss, with pale pink starry flowers, soft belled gentians and pure white transparent lilies'

There is danger with this lavish hand of over-painting the picture. There are colours in plenty, but no colour. 'An epithet is an addition : but an addition may easily become an encumbrance, as even a dog finds out when a kettle is tied to his tail.' Compare this stanza—

Large flocks with fleecy wool adorn  
The cheerful downs, the valleys bring  
A plenteous crop of full-eared corn  
And seem for joy to shout and sing

with the prose version—

The folds shall be full of sheep : the valleys also shall stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing.

and it must be admitted that the epithets in the verse are a very definite encumbrance. A most objectionable use of epithets is when they are dragged into verse merely to eke out the metre. Examples are common in all periods of English poetry, but perhaps the most widespread and irritating laxity is to be found in the eighteenth century. The following is from Pope's translation of Homer

And beaming fires illumined all the ground,  
As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,  
O'er heavens pure azure spreads her sacred light,  
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,  
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;  
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,  
And stars unnumbered gild the glowing pole;  
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,  
And tip with silver every mountain's head

The best way of realizing that these are what Johnson termed 'parasitical' epithets (a very happy epithet itself) is to compare it with a translation of the same passage by another hand.

Many a fire before them blazed ·  
As when in heaven the stars about the moon  
Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,  
And every height comes out, and jutting peak  
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens  
Break open to their highest, and all the stars  
Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his heart.

The one epithet in this extract 'immeasurable' (the very sound of spaciousness) is worth more than the whole of Pope's job lot.

"The examination of epithets is extremely helpful in analysing and discussing style. Set side by side two such passages (it is more helpful if they deal with same theme) as Swift's description of the King of Lilliput and Ruskin's description of the King of the Golden River.

'He was dressed in a slashed doublet of spun gold, so fine in its texture, that the prismatic colours gleamed over it, as if on a surface of mother-of-pearl; and over this brilliant doublet, his hair



and beard fell full half-way to the ground, in waving curls, so exquisitely delicate, that Gluck could hardly tell where they ended; they seemed to melt into air. The features of the face, however, were by no means finished with the same delicacy; they were rather coarse, slightly inclining to coppery in complexion, and indicative, in expression, of a very pertinacious and intractable disposition in their small proprietor.

And this is Swift.

‘His features are strong and masculine, with an Austrian lip and arched nose, his complexion olive, his countenance erect, his body and limbs well proportioned, all his motions graceful, and his deportment majestic. . . His dress was very plain and simple, and the fashion of it between the Asiatic and the European but he had on his head a light helmet of gold, adorned with jewels, and a plume on the crest. He held his sword drawn in his hand to defend himself if I should happen to break loose, it was almost three inches long, the hilt and scabbard were gold enriched with diamonds.’

Swift’s eulogy of the style of the Brobdingnagians, which may quite possibly be his own ideal of good writing, ‘Their style is clear, masculine and smooth but not florid, for they avoid nothing more than multiplying unnecessary words or using various expressions’, might justly be applied to his description. Ruskin multiplies his epithets somewhat after the German idiom, he is a three epithet man and the result is a piece of writing which sounds almost un-English by the side of Swift. Mr Rudyard Kipling has described himself in the days of his apprenticeship to writing as ‘dredging’ the dictionary for adjectives. It would hardly be wise to set children such an ungrateful task as that, quite apart from the consideration that the dictionary is no more than a *hortus siccus* to children. But they might very usefully dredge such an author as Ruskin.

Something remains to be said of the permanent epithet. It is rare in English Literature (the ‘bold’ Sir Bedivere, the ‘melancholy’ Jaques are perhaps the best-known examples) but common in conventional journalism. Its use in good writing has something of the same value as a *leit-motif* in opera, where the repetition of a musical phrase becomes charged with a fixed emotional or narrative significance.

sentence is an example.) Every asset becomes 'priceless', every tragedy 'deplorable', every attempt 'praiseworthy'.

'Simpson's artistry was a priceless asset to his side, and it was a deplorable tragedy for this popular idol, when in a praiseworthy attempt to stave off an attack by the nippy forwards of Buncombe, he turned the ball through his own goal.'

Writing in this kind ('Jargon', Sir A. Quiller-Couch calls it) is a labour-saving device to the busy journalist who has no time to think out the inevitable word, and the newspaper reader is so inured to it that he fails to realize its paralysing effect on thought. The pity of it is that children when they come to the newspaper reading age fall so easily into the conventional idiom.

The ground of Appreciation having now been surveyed, and to some extent explored, the time has come to consider how a particular piece of literature can be presented and examined in the class-room. It is not to be supposed that mere comment on technical beauties, however judiciously done, will be a sovereign specific for the growth of Appreciation. What explanation can discover the felicity of

Not that fair field  
Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,  
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis  
Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain  
To seek her through the world.

Even with poetry less triumphantly inevitable than this, the teacher will often feel the futility of explanation. But—and this is its justification—the teacher's comment may reveal unsuspected beauties, and furthermore serve as a guide when the child attempts criticism for himself. I have chosen *Morte d'Arthur* because it is very commonly found in children's anthologies, because it exhibits within itself many of the excellences which have previously been spoken of, and because it is a good example of the art which does not quite conceal art.

The class is presumed to be of senior children who have a general acquaintance with the Arthurian legend, but are studying *Morte d'Arthur* for the first time.

The preliminary explanation before the first reading should be short and pointed. Some extremists, re-acting from the kind of preparation in which the teacher told the

story of the poem in his own words (as if any words could better the poet's own) would permit no preparation of any kind. But a certain kind of verbal explanation is not only permissible, but necessary. Where ignorance of meaning is likely to obscure the picture, explanation should certainly be offered. In *Morte d'Arthur*, for example, the colour in the description of Excalibur is heightened if the child knows that 'topaz' is blue and 'jacinth' red, and similarly with 'swarthy webs'. Such a word as 'samite' is obviously not in the same class: enough of its meaning is suggested in the context as to make explanation superfluous and possibly undesirable. Such explanation as is decided upon should be written up before the reading begins.

The first reading should be without break, and it is possibly wiser to defer the detailed examination until the next period rather than run any risk of disturbing the unity of the first impression. Tennyson in the poetical preface to the poem—it is always omitted in the anthologies—has spoken of a poet's manner of reading *Morte d'Arthur*. It should be borne in mind.

. . . and the poet little urged,  
But with some prelude of disparagement,  
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,  
Deep-chested music

When the poem comes to be examined the teacher will very naturally begin by asking if any one would like to suggest points for study. The first line of inquiry should be concerned with the word-music. It is especially noticeable in the opening and the close and depends very largely upon vowel interplay. It will be noticed that the long vowels in the first two lines form almost a complete vowel sequence. The first two lines might be written on the blackboard with the vowels marked.

1        2        1            1                    1  
Sō all dāy long the noise of battle rōll'd  
1            1        2        3                    4  
Among the mountāins bȳ the winter sēa.

The lines from

To the island valley of Avilion

to

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound,

could be treated in a similar manner; and the vowels numbered to show their interplay. The charm of the proper names—Camelot, Avilion, due in large measure to the liquid 'l's', compare Melilot—will be commented on. The help of alliteration in varying or sustaining the melody may be made the subject of an exercise.

Connected in technique with word-music is echo-writing. The class it is presumed will already be familiar with this device through their readings aloud. The teacher should recall and comment on its use.

Both variations of the song of the water,

I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag,

and

I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds,

might be written on the blackboard, repeated by individuals and—to multiply the sound—in chorus. The contrast between the rather hard metallic sound of 'lapping on the crag' and the soft and subdued 'long ripple washing in the reeds' should be pointed out. The truth of the contrast in reality could be observed in a school walk. Attention will next be turned to the lines—

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,  
And strongly wheel'd and threw it.

Bedivere acts with speed and suddenness because he dare not give himself time for reflection, and the abrupt and almost passionate energy of his movement is marvellously suggested. The detail for comment is almost inexhaustible. Notice particularly how the abruptness of movement is carried on through the use of explosive words 'plunged', 'clutched', and the way the movement of the words which is accelerated in the smooth phrasing of 'leaping down the ridges lightly' is arrested as if out of breath after 'threw it'. It will be noticed that the caesura is used to strengthen and emphasize the pause. Speed is obtained by the use of short almost monosyllabic phrasing. Possibly the teacher may be tempted to comment on the amazing

art with which the ringing sound of iron on stone is suggested in the lines—

The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of arméd heels—(These lines  
should be taken in one breath )

but he will be wiser to leave a sufficiency of material for the class to examine unaided. But there is a very striking contrast in sound between these lines and the two which follow

And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon,

which the child will almost certainly miss unless it is pointed out to him. Another passage in which the help of the teacher will be indispensable is the one beginning

So saying, from the pavement he half rose.

The feeble and spasmodic movement of the wounded king is echoed in the broken movement of the line—

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm.

There is a very similar line intended to suggest the intermittent falling of a mountain waterfall in the *Lotos-Eaters*

the slender stream  
Along the cliff to fall, and pause, and fall did seem,

which should be compared with this line. And for contrast there is the intercepted movement of a line in the near context—

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge.

The Figures of Speech should next be examined. They will first be identified, and if the children have done much of this sort of work, it is possible that they will notice how sparingly the Figures are used here. Possibly the unadorned manner of writing is a reflection from Malory's prose. In the Cambridge Readings of English Literature, Malory is very properly placed alongside Tennyson's Poem. Two metaphors will need comment

Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will

The best way of getting the class to realize the economy and force of 'widowed' is to ask for a speech paraphrase. The metaphor is not a particularly happy one (to me), but it is a good example of the shorthand writing which is the especial strength of the figure.

the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth,

is an example of the pictorial use of metaphor. Possibly it may be observed that skirts scarcely conveys the trailing effect nowadays which it did in Tennyson's time. One of the finest metaphors in the poem, though the personal significance of 'star' has been rather blown upon by theatre slang, is

Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tournament

It gives us the double picture of beauty and—read with the next line—of great speed.

The consistency with which the star is made to 'shoot' through the lists and not 'ride' or 'charge' should be noticed. The beautiful and pictorial simile—

. for all his face was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east,

is rendered more impressive by the contrast in colour 'striped with dark blood'. The epithets in this passage are singularly happy: 'withered moon', 'springing east', and the truth of observation in 'dark' blood is characteristic of one of the most observant of English poets.

There is another striking simile a few lines further on

So like a shatter'd column lay the King

'Column' pictures out the idea of strength and impressiveness, 'shattered column' shows us stark and irremediable ruin.

The personification of Excalibur is not borrowed from Malory, but it heightens wonderfully the interest felt in the famous sword and its mysterious fate. The passing of Excalibur is felt almost as a personal loss, and is quite as impressive as the passing of Arthur himself.

Lastly, the blank-verse form will be analysed and some few lines scanned. There is no harm in calling the measure

by its proper name, the Iambic Pentameter. If the class is responsive a little Miltonic blank verse may be read in order to show that whatever may be the merits of Tennyson's blank verse he could not write in the Miltonic idiom.

Hail, holy light! offspring of Heav'n, first-born,  
Or of th' Eternal Coeternal beam  
May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light,  
And never but in unapproached light  
Dwelt from Eternitie, dwelt then in thee,  
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.

There is a spring and elasticity about this which makes Tennyson's handling of the metre seem lame if not lifeless. The teacher will be the best judge whether or no he can usefully inquire into the reasons why, humanly speaking, Tennyson's blank verse misses the fire and ease of Milton. Possibly it may be found in the fact that, especially in certain passages in Tennyson's poem, the metre sounds and reads short-breathed and it seems powerless to plume its wings for long flights such as Milton commands with consummate ease. But adverse criticism should not be the staple of the lesson. It should be used very sparingly with children, as the natural salt wherewith to season admiration and to make the meal wholesome. A series of questions on *Morte d'Arthur* is given in the hope that the teacher may prefer to make his own.

1. Write down what you consider the most musical line or lines in *Morte d'Arthur*. Say why they are musical.

2. Find other instances of echo-writing in *Morte d'Arthur*, quote them, and say what you can about them.

3. 'and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam'

Tennyson uses the obvious jingle 'shrill, chill' of set purpose. Can you say what this purpose is?

4. 'Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.'

What Figure of Speech is used in this line? There is a figure hidden in addition to the obvious one. Find and invent a name for it, if you do not know its real name.

5. Make another simile to describe how Arthur felt when Bedivere carried him on his back. N.B.—First look up the simile which Tennyson uses.

6. There is a natural pause in the blank-verse line which is used to avoid tiring the ear with sameness. Mark these pauses in any six lines of the poem.

7 Here are two passages, one in prose and one in verse, describing what Bedivere saw and heard when he was sent to throw Excalibur into the mere

Then back he came to tell the king,  
Who said, ' Sir Lukyn, saw ye ought ? '  
' Nothing, my liege, save that the wind  
Now with the angry waters fought '

' And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree And so, as soon as he might he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water and had thrown the sword into the water What saw thou there, said the king Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wappe, and the waves wan '

Compare these passages with the parallel lines in the poem, and say which of the three versions you like best, and give at least one reason for your choice.

8 The legend says that King Arthur will return again to rule in his kingdom. Write a prose account of the return of Arthur or write a short ballad having as its subject The romantic death of Sir Bedivere, last of the Knights of the Round Table

9. Take any narrative poem in your Anthology and criticize it in the same lines as the class criticism of the *Morte d'Arthur*. N.B.—The order was (a) Word Music, (b) Echo-writing, (c) Figures of Speech, (d) Form, but you need not follow this order.

10 Find instances of alliteration in *Morte d'Arthur*. Introduce the phrase 'the bold Sir Bedivere' into a line or stanza of your own making and continue the alliteration of b's

11 Suppose some one said to you that they see nothing in Poetry (Thoughtless people do say this sort of thing, and ignorant people have even been known to define poetry as 'all bosh'.) Write down what you would say in defence of Poetry. Use the *Morte d'Arthur* to illustrate your remarks. N.B.—Your reply will certainly do yourself more good than it will the ignorant person.

12. Make up a question on *Morte d'Arthur*.



There are certain practical considerations which may find a place at the end of this chapter. With a wide field out of which to choose material for Appreciation there is danger of rambling. One way of securing direction for the work is to make the week's activities in English centre round one author. A week is probably as convenient a time as may be found, unless there is a general desire on the part of the class to extend the period. Chronological selection offers an obvious opportunity of linking Literature and History, and it helps to prevent mistakes in the placing of authors. But with a less rigid system it is possible to devise piquant contrasts and stimulating comparisons, as when the luxuriance of De Quincey is followed by the austerity of Swift, or the richness of sound in Milton is placed alongside the richness of sound in Biblical prose. Even the seasons may exercise some selective influence—fanciful it may be, and possibly none the worse for that. Dr. Bridges' poems are full of the sights and sounds of the moving year, but especially does he seem to be the poet of Spring. What more appropriate reading in spring-time than 'April 1885' or 'February 1890', or the 'First Spring Morning' or 'Spring goeth all in white', or in winter-tide than Christina Rossetti's 'In the bleak mid-winter', or Kingsley's 'Ode to the North-East Wind', or Hood's 'November'? May-day almost makes its own selection with Milton's 'Song for May Morning', and Herrick's 'Corinna's Going A-Maying'. Possibly those within sight of the sea might decide to give one term at least in the year to our salt-water literature with its gallery of unforgettable portraits from Chaucer's 'Shipman' to Mr. Masfield's 'Old bold mate of Henry Morgan'. But whatever order is decided upon, room should be found in it for the poet of the local countryside. Crabbe is not a child's poet, but one would like to think that the children of Aldeburgh were not unacquainted with his pictures of the scenery at their own doors. Surely it should not be possible to teach in an Oxford school without some mention of *Thyrsis* and *The Scholar-Gypsy*, or in a Cambridge school without reading *Granichester*. The following is suggested for a week's work in Matthew Arnold:

Dictation (20 minutes).

From *The Forsaken Merman* (The under world—ll 30-47).

Reading aloud (30 minutes)

The first part of *Sohrab and Rustum*.

Private reading (30 minutes).

The remaining portion of *Sohrab and Rustum*.

Appreciation (20 minutes).

The use made of Repetition in 'The Neckan', the poem which is the introduction to *The Forsaken Merman*

Written work (90 minutes).

*Verse.* Margaret's account of her marriage with The Neckan and her home under the waves, written in the first person and in the metre of 'The Neckan'.<sup>1</sup>

*Prose.* The fight between Sohrab and Rustum as told by an onlooker in the Tartar host.

Among the aids which are being increasingly used in the teaching of Appreciation is the Common-place Book. This is a copying book designed to be a treasure-house of good things. It is, in fact, the anthology which the child makes for himself. Although the keeping of such a book should be encouraged in every possible way short of command, if the child shows no real desire to commence one, or if there is a falling off in its use, he is better without it. Above all, the teacher should hold his hand. It is true that if the book is the free expression of the child's taste, its contents will be as accurate a measure of the work in Appreciation as it is possible, perhaps even desirable, to obtain. But it is also true that dictation on the part of the teacher will reduce what should be a valuable record of the child in his spiritual aspect, to the level of a second rate anthology. Original verse might be kept in a separate part of the book.

There is another copying book which the elementary school might find a use for. In some of the public schools a record of the best original work done in the whole school is kept in a copy book, and if a boy reaches the high standard which the master sets before him, he is allowed a 'copy'. Such a book may often induce the teacher in his despondent moments to cry 'Ichabod', but its use is

<sup>1</sup> Material for this will have been heard and written down in the Dictation Period.

a constant reminder to the child that there are standards of writing, it is a recognition of, and a reward for merit, it is a stimulus to endeavour. The book should be substantially bound, and of good appearance.

In the last few years there has been a great revival of interest in the teaching of English. In the elementary schools it has been, and always will remain, the most important subject in the curriculum, and its importance in schools other than elementary is not likely to be lessened by the decay of the classical languages. A great deal of the teaching, both in appreciation and creative work, must be incidental in kind. The teacher himself cannot escape setting a standard both in his speech and in the material which he lays under contribution for his lessons. It is a simple duty for him to aim at a clear and vigorous speech, and set his face against printed rubbish. It was my misfortune to see recently an educational weekly, which has a wide circulation among teachers. In it were some extraordinary teaching notes on Shakespeare's tragedies. 'Some people', says the author, 'prefer one and some another, but there is little to choose between them for brilliance, as they are all superb'. *King Lear* is adjudged to be less 'brilliant' than *Hamlet* although it is 'full of brilliant speeches and contains a very clever plot'. *Hamlet* indeed, in the opinion of the writer is the most 'brilliant character in all our literature'. But even this scarcely prepares one for the 'brilliance' of the following, which is intended for a school concert:

Oh, what a miserable time you have  
When you're standing in a queue;  
The cold wind blows and the rain comes down  
When you're standing in a queue,  
You feel very tired, and you'd like to be at home  
But what are you to do?  
You cannot get any food unless  
You are standing in a queue,  
You are standing in a queue.

But now we are so very glad  
We have got a ration book,  
We hope our troubles are over quite  
Now we've got a ration book (*show book*);

We've got our names written on the back  
 And inside are coupons—look ;  
 We hope our troubles are over quite  
 Now we've got a ration book,  
 Now we've got a ration book

(Children can make the imitation of ration books during handwork lesson )

Surely it is not possible to mistake the pages of an educational journal for a music-hall song sheet. But what other hypothesis can in charity be suggested ?

There is another adverse influence which is likely to make the teaching of the Appreciation of Literature increasingly difficult. I mean the influence of the cinematograph. Children who are reared on the strong meat of the picture-palaces will come to the more delicate viands of literature with dulled palates and jaded appetites. Furthermore, there is the corruption of language which follows in the wake of the cinematograph. It is not so much the actual debasing of our tongue through the introduction of Americanisms. It may well be that the speech of Milton and Burke will never suffer its purity to be stained for long by the argot of the Bowery. But there is a much more fundamental corruption which must overtake language when the appeal to the eye is largely substituted for the appeal to the ear. There are already disquieting signs in the enormous popularity of the picture paper and the photographer's invasion of the columns of the daily press. If this 'look-see' reading maintains itself, then our democracy must become primitive in its handling of language.

It is very commonly urged against the specialist that he makes exaggerated claims for his own subject. But it is not possible to exaggerate the importance of the appreciation of literature. It is unfortunate indeed, that the appreciation of any art should be forced to rank as a school 'subject' in any sense. For the teaching of appreciation is in truth the teaching of the art of living. Art—so the faithful are persuaded—increases our sense of the meaning of life, and thereby deepens and enriches the quality of life itself. Pater devoted the last essay in his *Renaissance Studies* to maintaining this position ; his argument there is the artists' gloss on one of the most pregnant texts in the Bible. 'The letter killeth, but the

Spirit giveth life.' Art shows us the spirit of man brooding over 'exultations, agonies, and love, and Man's unconquerable mind', and through the travail of one man's spirit, the souls of unnumbered men rest and are satisfied.

Through Art, man defies the corrosion of Time, and celebrates a victory over the Annihilation which overwhelms all other vestiges of his pride and power

All passes Art alone  
Enduring stays with us  
The bust outlasts the throne,  
The coin Tiberius

Those to whom it is given to behold the true beauty of Art  
'become the friend of God, and immortal'.

## APPENDIX

### THE TEACHER'S PRIVATE READING

IN this short appendix, I should like to set down some few notes on the teacher's private reading which may be of use to the young student working alone or under incompetent guidance.

It is clear that the teacher's taste in literature will largely determine his own culture and that of his pupils, and will enormously influence his outlook on his work. It is clear that unless he brings some sort of criticism to his reading, that unless, for example, he is able to distinguish between the novels of Thomas Hardy and Ethel M. Dell, between the poems of Christina Rossetti and those of Ella Wheeler Wilcox, between the style of Pater and that of Mr. Bottomley, he will scarcely be in a position to help his pupils to their own values.

How is a fine taste to be acquired ; and how may the critical habit be stimulated and developed ? Matthew Arnold advises the use of touch-stones. 'Take of Shakespeare a line or two of Henry the Fourth's expostulation with sleep,

Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast  
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains  
In cradle of the rude imperious surge . .

Take of Milton,

Darken'd so, yet shone  
Above them all the arch-angel ; but his face  
Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care  
Sat on his faded cheek. .

These few lines, if we have tact and can use them, are enough even of themselves to keep clear and sound our judgments about poetry, to save us from fallacious estimates of it, to conduct us to a real estimate.' This is excellent ; and mature criticism, no doubt, works in some such fashion. But it is more excellent for the critic than for the neophyte. The readers who can select such touch-stones already possess a discriminating taste. And unless

(as Arnold seems to suspect) the touch-stones are used with intelligence, the results will be anything but felicitous. In the house of poetry are many mansions; and amateur criticism, misled by quite adventitious resemblances, is always thrusting unfortunate poets through the wrong doors. Let us rather go back to principles. There are certain quite well-known and elementary canons of criticism which may serve for a compass to the voyager in the ocean of literature which even in Solomon's day threatened to engulf the earnest student.

*There is first, the affair of emotion* A noble book or a fine poem is, in Wordsworth's phrase, 'felt in the blood and felt along the heart'. Literature is a life force, an outpouring of man's enduring spirit, and so fine poetry and fine prose stir our being as surely as one deep calleth another. Andrew Lang has said that all bad poetry is written in a state of emotion. It is certain that no sort of poetry can be written without emotion, and the finest poetry (as Wordsworth taught us) is written when the head has had time to chasten and correct the heart. If we do not catch fire from a book, it may be inferior literature—there is, of course, a more obvious explanation. Many, alas, the spiritually dead, 'getting and spending, have laid waste their powers'. They derive what can scarcely be called a spiritual sustenance from ledger and cheque book. Literature can do nothing for these unfortunates, except perhaps write their epitaphs; and in any case they are not likely to come questing in these pages.

We seek first then, Emotion; but other things must be added. There may be the perfectly genuine emotion of a revivalist sermon, or the palpably artificial emotion of a newspaper leader, but neither is likely to be literature. A cabman, on receiving his legal fare, may express himself emotionally, but a certain lack of restraint will prevent him ranking with the masters of language. He will not, as Young advised,

File off the mortal part  
Of glowing thought with Attic art.

Emotion must be shaped into symmetry. It must be tried and purified in the creative fire, before it can speak the great accent of Art.

*In a word, there must be FORM.* There are, and always will be, misguided people who affect to be content with matter and despise form. But in all fine work, matter and style are fused into a homogeneous whole, and there is no possible divorce between them

For of the soul the body form doth take,  
For soul is form and doth the body make

In these famous and pregnant lines Spenser delivers to us the true doctrine of Art. Form is a condition of being for Literature; moreover, the Artist will suggest through his Form the mood which his matter has laid upon him and will modulate his Form through metrical and rhythmical removes in accordance with the rise and fall of his theme. This last is so natural and appropriate that while we may not always be conscious (in good reading) of the close connexion between matter and style, just because it is so natural and appropriate, we at once revolt against any incongruity. In praise of Music, Pope writes a lyric which ends,

Thus song could prevail  
O'er death and o'er hell,  
A conquest how hard and how glorious;  
Tho' fate had fast bound her,  
With Styx nine times round her,  
Yet Music and Love were victorious

One need not be an accomplished critic to feel that this is the wrong key. It might be allowed in praise of a barrel organ, but the machine-made rhythm, and the discordant rhymes are unable to carry the high theme. Now listen to what a greater than Pope makes of the same subject:

From harmony, from heavenly harmony  
This universal frame began.  
From harmony to harmony  
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,  
The diapason closing full in Man.

This is music made in praise of Music; than which nothing can be more fitting. But though Literature always states itself in the right key, that is, in appropriate Form, it allows of an infinite variety in the working out of the key, and it is in this working out that the artist finds freedom. A parallel reading of the poems on Autumn by



Keats, Shelley, and Hood, or of the beauty and terror of Death as treated by Bacon, Sir Thomas Browne, and the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes, will make my meaning clear.

It is utilitarian readers who fail to realize the necessity of Form. They go to books to 'lift' rather than to be uplifted, and demand of poetry that it should fill their heads instead of empty their hearts. The mythical mathematician who, after reading

Half a league, half a league, half a league onward,

inquired, 'Why couldn't the fool say a league and a half and have done with it?' spoke the authentic note of the tribe.

Mrs. Browning in the first book of *Aurora Leigh*—which all teachers would do well to read for its educational interest—has well said

We get no good  
By being ungenerous, even to a book,  
And calculating profits . . . so much help  
By so much reading. It is rather when  
We gloriously forget ourselves, and plunge  
Soul forward, headlong, into a book's profound,  
Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth—  
'Tis then we get the right good from a book

This seems to me, wise and very necessary counsel; and particularly for people who, like the writer, have been condemned to spend many bitter hours, burrowing in text-books for what they did not particularly want to find, a process known, I believe, as 'improving the mind'. And the 'ungenerous readers' are fittingly punished, inasmuch as they find what they seek *and no more*. In this manner of reading nothing fails like success. 'An unharmonious and rugged period (says Lord Chesterfield) shocks my ears; and I, like all the rest of the world, will willingly exchange and give up some degree of rough sense, for a good degree of pleasing sound.' We are not constrained to admit the necessity of sacrificing sense to sound; but the more extensive our reading may be, the more shall we be persuaded that matter is diminished in power and restricted in appeal, when it is not presented in forms of order and beauty. Disregard of Form is apt to result in

that sort of 'easy writing' which, as Sheridan bitterly complained, is 'curst hard reading'.

It is possible that succeeding generations will feel the need of re-shaping and supplementing their Art-forms; though we may well believe that the new wine will continue to ferment safely in the old bottles. The apologists and imitators of Whitman (who succeeds, it has been pointed out, in proportion as he obeys the laws of metrical form) cry out for a larger freedom. Why they should affect to be cramped within boundaries which were ample enough for a Shakespeare, is somewhat of a mystery. Is it that the 'laborious days' and the 'delights scorned' which fall to the portion of the artist who sedulously practises the technique of his art, are not to their way of thinking? Perhaps it is only the new artfulness. It is certainly not the old art.

*Lastly, there is the great principle of Restraint.*

Reticence in literature is the secret of power, and in all probability there is no more difficult art for the writer than the art of leaving off. There is a pertinent story told of Coleridge. He was visiting one of the Cumberland waterfalls and was literally speechless with admiration. A lady standing within earshot murmured aloud the one word, 'Majestic'. It was the inevitable adjective and the poet said as much. 'Yes, indeed,' pursued the lady, 'it is splendid, glorious, wonderful!' And that is how literature is not written. There is in fine literature an economy in the use of words, and an habitual use of the right word. The great writers, if I may be allowed a sporting metaphor, 'strip well'. The Bible excels in this quality of restraint. 'And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.' Many modern authors seem almost to have lost this gift of naked speech. They would probably put it more like this. 'Let us have an economical and efficient lighting apparatus, and so, finally, a method of illumination was installed.' It was a bishop<sup>1</sup> who confessed that he wrote long letters because he had no time to write short ones. But the ability to write short letters is a hall-mark in literature. Our younger novelists, in particular, are prolix

<sup>1</sup> And he stole the remark from Pascal.

to tediousness. There is the art of the journalist, who, writing against time, is incurably verbose. They require as many words for their heroine's eyelashes as would suffice a master for her character. In the end, this sort of writing defeats itself. You know much less of the modern heroine than you do of Saurey Gamp's crony, Mrs. Harris, for example, who never appears on the scene at all. The literary craftsman conveys more by his silences, than inferior writers do by speech. He is aware that the half is better than the whole. He leaves blanks for the reader's imagination to fill in, and makes a skilful use of suggestion. It is a wasteful writer who builds entirely out of his own head. Occasionally it may happen that the reader has some difficulty in getting on intimate terms with a recognized classic. Strangely enough, Dumas could never read *Don Quixote*. It is hardly wise to conclude that the book has been over-rated. The classics have stood their trial at the bar of posterity, and as with the Phoenix, the passing of time does but renew their youth.

I have refrained from suggesting courses of reading. English literature is a wide field, and after a general view has been taken, inclination will probably stake out a claim in a favourite corner. Tranio's advice underlies all fruitful study.

No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en ;  
In brief, Sir, study what you most affect.

But the student of English will do well to keep his heart open to the appeal of poetry. The advancing years bring peculiar disabilities to the teacher, and the love of poetry will help to delay that superannuation of the spirit which so often rots the core of middle age; indeed, it may even keep a man young at the last.

Emotion, Form, Restraint: such, then, are the roots which nourish literature. But when criticism has said its last word, there remain excellencies which cannot be explained.

Some beauties yet no Precepts can declare,  
For there's a happiness as well as care.  
Music resembles Poetry; in each  
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,  
And which a master hand alone can reach.

Bacon pays a noteworthy tribute to these 'nameless graces'. 'A Painter may make a better face than ever was ; But he must do it by a kind of Felicity (As a Musician that maketh an excellent Ayre in Music) And not by Rule.'

And so men speak of the 'happy' Art of the great creators, meaning their Inspiration, that pure breath of the Divine spirit, blowing where it listeth o'er the hearts of the children of Apollo.

## SHORT LIST OF BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

- Lamborn, G. *Rudiments of Criticism* Oxford University Press  
 Batchelor *Notes on the Teaching of English* Macmillan.  
 Quiller-Couch *Lectures on the Art of Writing* Cambridge University Press  
 Finch *English Composition* Evans (Kingsway)  
 Townsend Warner *On the Writing of English* Blackie.  
 Nicol *English Composition* Macmillan  
 Nicol. *Questions and Exs on Eng Composition.* Macmillan.  
 Wyld *The Teaching of Reading* Murray.  
 Burrell. *Clear Speaking and Good Reading.* Longmans.  
 Hulbert *Voice Training* University Tutorial Press.  
 Pritchard *Studies in Literature* Harrap  
 Newbolt *A New Study of English Poetry* Constable  
 Compton Rickett *History of English Literature* Jack  
 Mair. *Modern English Literature* Williams and Norgate.  
 O'Grady *Matter, Form, and Style* Murray  
 Wyld *Growth of English.* Murray  
 Bailey *Poets and Poetry* Oxford University Press  
 Jones *English Critical Essays (Nineteenth Century)* Oxford University Press  
 Fowler. *The King's English.* Oxford University Press  
 Fowler *Concise Oxford Dictionary* Oxford University Press  
 Leonard. *The Pageant of English Prose* Oxford University Press.  
 Beaumont *A Book of English Poetry* Jack  
 Ransome *Portraits and Speculations* Macmillan.  
 Kennedy *English Literature, 1880-1895* Stephen Swift.  
 English Association. *Poems of To-day* Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd.  
 English Association. *Essays and Studies* (5 vols). Oxford University Press  
 Duckitt and Wragg *Selected English Letters* Oxford University Press  
 Bartholomew. *Literary and Historical Atlas* (2 vols.). Dent (Everyman).  
 Rannie. *The Elements of Style.* Dent.  
 Gissing. *Dickens A Critical Study.* The Gresham Company.  
 Murson. *English Composition* Cambridge University Press.  
 Lamborn, G. *Expression in Speech and Writing* Oxford University Press  
 Dobrée. *Modern Prose Style* Oxford University Press  
 Hadow. *Poetry and Music* Cambridge University Press  
 Housman. *The Name and Nature of Poetry.* Cambridge University Press.

PRINTED IN  
GREAT BRITAIN  
AT THE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS  
OXFORD  
BY  
JOHN JOHNSON  
PRINTER  
TO THE  
UNIVERSITY